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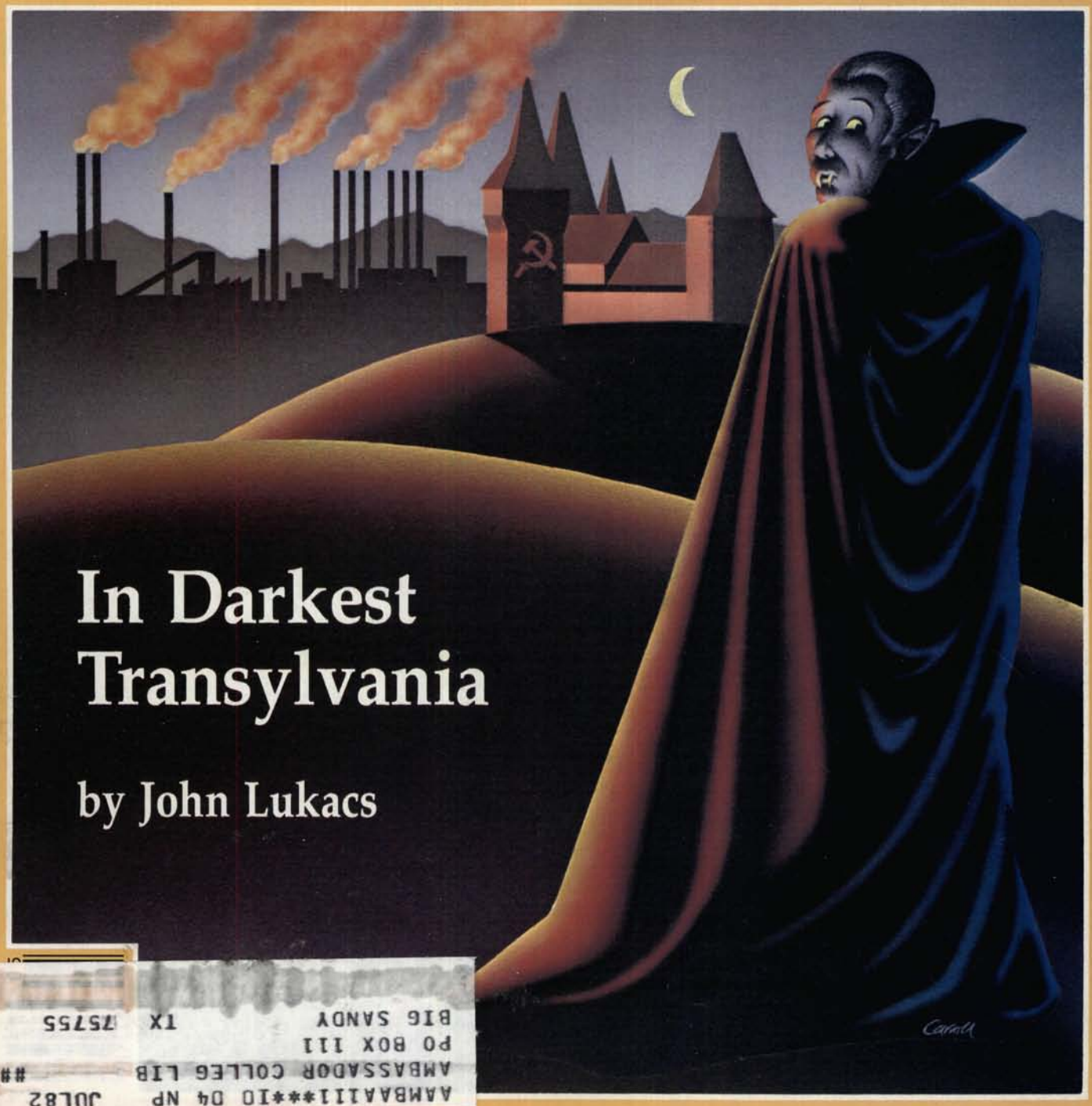
Who's Really Running Reagan's Government?

Jack Beatty on Saul Bellow • Ann Douglas on Perry Miller

THE NEW REPUBLIC



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CORRESPONDENCE

RACIST STATISTICS

To the editors:
George M. Fredrickson does the cause of racial justice and equality no favor by his inept use of statistics ("Two Steps Forward, One Step Back," TNR, December 16, 1981). For instance, he claims that "in 1969 black families earned on the average 62 percent as much as white families; by 1979 their income was only 57 percent of the white norm."

The point he wished to convey, one must assume, is that the drop in family income was due to some form of racism. But other factors, such as increased illegitimacy among blacks and a greater creation of female-headed households among blacks might account for this income drop. It is possible that this family disintegration itself might be due to some form of racism, but to quote the economic statistics in the manner he did only lends ammunition to people like Thomas Sowell. Sowell can then legitimately point to, for instance, college-educated black families in which both husband and wife work and earn more than their white counterparts and argue that therefore one must assume our society is not fundamentally racist. In other words, when factors such as education, age, and family status are taken into account, racism disappears. Fredrickson and others might be ruining what could be a good case by improper use of evidence.

Robert Primack
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

SWEDEN'S NEUTRALITY

To the editors:
Sweden will surely survive the undeserved slurs which appeared in M.P.'s "Washington Diarist" (TNR, December 30, 1981). Every nation acts during wartime to suit its own national self-interest, as did we Americans. Sweden's World War II neutrality was part luck, part intentional—and was a mixed bag. It meant a safe haven for many escaping Nazism, including Allied airmen. And how can you forget Raoul Wallenberg, who acted in Budapest to save Jews?

No other country in the world has a democratic trade union movement which has done more for its members than has Sweden. And Sweden today contributes more of its gross national product to third world development than any other nation. Whatever else Swedes do to offend THE NEW REPUBLIC pales by comparison.

Franklin Wallick
United Auto Workers
Washington, D.C.

Martin Peretz replies:
Since neutralism between Soviet totalitarianism and Western democracy is now O.K., it's no wonder that neutralism between democracy and Nazi totalitarianism has become, well, if not exactly O.K., then "a mixed bag."

SAFE ENERGY PRODUCTION

To the editors:
You are right, most people like to farm out the dangers of energy production to Appalachia or overseas ("Energy Casualties," TNR, December 23, 1981). But you are wrong to concentrate on this and neglect how danger from energy production can be reduced. People who "take to the streets on energy matters" have probably helped make nuclear energy safer. The mine safety laws of 1941 and 1969 followed public dismay at mine disasters in preceding years and demonstrably reduced coal fatality rates. Topmost and Palmer are horrible disasters, but such events happen less often now. And one reason why nuclear reactors have caused only psychological health damage—so far—may be that public political action has encouraged regulation. Though sometimes grudgingly, government has responded to public demands that energy production be safer. Now, though, Reagan's Administration is all too willing to belittle these demands and to niggle on safety.

Charles S. Perry
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky

WOMEN WARRIORS

To the editors:
So, once again, the old "women's nature" argument surfaces, this time as a justification for keeping women out of combat ("Arms and the Woman," by John Keegan, TNR, December 30, 1981). We've heard it all before, and it is no less bunk now than when it was used to keep us away from the polls. As long as women are not required to accept the ultimate consequences of their government's actions, they may be excluded from the policymaking as well. How very convenient for men accustomed to sole occupancy of the halls of power. May I also suggest that, next time, Mr. Keegan try to include some small discussion of the book (in this case, Helen Rogan's *Mixed Company*) he is ostensibly reviewing?

Sandra Pierce Stryker
St. Paul, Minnesota

GUATEMALAN ELECTIONS

To the editors:
Regarding your editorial on Reagan's Central American policy ("War Talk Down South," TNR, December 23, 1981), the fact that Guatemala is holding an election next March has about as much meaning as the fact that the Soviet Union holds regular elections. Guatemala's last two presidential contests were blatantly fixed by the army. In 1982 the Christian Democrats will not even enter the race as they have done in all previous elections—they've simply given up, as have the Social Democrats who have long since gone underground. The only parties remaining are extreme right-wing and fascist ones. In any event, the winner has already been selected by the only vote that counts, that of the military. He will be the nation's present defense minister. Your notion that Guatemala's "election" in March means Reagan's policy in Central America is "showing progress" is absurd.

Stephen Schlesinger
New York, New York

CANCEL MY SUBSCRIPTION!

To the editors:
I can no longer tolerate the inane, inept refuse in THE NEW REPUBLIC. So please cancel my subscription and refund the balance thereof. (Your journal was worth reading during the days of the Sacco-Vanzetti case and the subsequent legal murder of these men.)

Phil Fordyce
Fayetteville, Arizona

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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FROM WASHINGTON

WORLD IN CRISIS

It all began normally enough two years ago, when the foreign ministers of the NATO countries approved the deployment of 572 theater nuclear missiles in Europe to counter the Soviet Union's new intermediate range missiles. Moscow was told that we would negotiate if she would come to the bargaining table.

I use the word "normal" because we have gotten into the habit of considering things normal that could blow the world apart. Spheres of influence are normal; so, in a sense, is the arms race. But nuclear power explosives aren't. It is the uniqueness of the present human dilemma that we live on two planes simultaneously: the old-fashioned military rivalry we are accustomed to, and this new nuclear threat. Every so often reality intrudes and people ask, "How long can this go on?"

That's what happened in Europe in the past two years. There were anti-nuclear protests in Amsterdam, Brussels, London, Rome, Paris, and Bonn. The demonstrators noted that between the bomb that demolished Hiroshima and the new Poseidon warhead the ratio of yield-to-weight has increased 150-fold. Today a submarine carries 16 missiles each with 10 warheads, and every warhead contains over three times the explosive force of the Hiroshima bomb. That adds up to a larger explosive power, in one submarine, than was used by all the munitions in World War II. Yes. It means that a single salvo from the sub can hit and destroy 160 targets, more targets than there are cities in the Soviet Union.

This is a fantastic, nightmare world. I would prefer not to think about it, and generally don't. Even when we do force ourselves to contemplate it, it's in vague terms that avoid reality. But the brutal facts are there. Drop a bomb in the middle of Chicago, for example. It creates a crater 400 feet deep and 1,200 feet in diameter and pulverizes all life and structures at the epicenter. In a tenth of a second, cars, buildings, people, and tons of debris are swept into a luminous fireball with temperatures exceeding 2,000 degrees Farenheit. Well, I could go on—up to the first two miles it creates a firestorm in which everyone dies; three miles from the center 50 percent die immediately and most of the rest later. It's all been calculated—the scorched area extends over 200 square miles. That's the threat we live under. The Russians have their missiles aimed at Europe, and we propose to aim more of ours back. The question is whether, after two years of gradually rising emotions, NATO allies are going to set up the missiles or whether the grand alliance is coming to an end. With the military takeover in Poland, we are in some sort of a crisis now. Robert Heilbroner, surveying the human prospect, commented bleakly that rapid population growth, the presence of obliterative weapons, and dwindling resources are bringing international tensions to dangerous levels. Are we returning to the cold war?

Congress meets this week and Reagan gives his State of the Union address on Tuesday, January 26. At the same time in Geneva, U.S. and Soviet negotiating teams continue talks on limiting nuclear weapons—about the most important thing going on in the world today. Meanwhile the situation in Poland deteriorates. It is an interval of unique importance. Are things better today than they were under Jimmy Carter? I would say no. The efforts of Nixon, Ford, and Carter produced SALT I and the aborted SALT II. Though the invasion of Afghanistan interrupted the process, it was assumed that a general direction had been fixed and that world peace prospects were getting better. There followed a series of belligerent utterances from the Reagan White House. He named as chief arms control negotiator General Rowny, a leading opponent of the 1979 arms treaty. Last February Brezhnev told the Moscow Party Congress that he was prepared for a dialogue, but that "since the change of leadership in the White House, candidly bellicose calls and statements have resounded from Washington, especially designed to poison the relations between our countries."

That's the Moscow line, of course, and General Rowny wasn't impressed. In testimony before the Senate he argued that the Soviets would continue to negotiate if we turned down SALT II. (They have.) "They need it, in my opinion, more than we do," he said confidently. "They will come back to the negotiating table. I think it is as simple as establishing the will power to bring this situation to fruition."

This is reassuring, of course, if you accept this comfortable view of the Soviet outlook. At his press conference last week, Reagan defended his big arms build-up: "If military defense is well done," he said, "it doesn't have to be used. We've never gotten into a war because we were too strong." Some people might ask, what about Korea, what about Vietnam? But at any rate we know where Reagan stands.

There are doubts, however, about the President's judgment, and those doubts have been growing. At the best of times there is a letdown after the first year in the Presidential cycle, after the euphoria of the election declines a bit. Reagan had a spectacular first year and got a huge tax cut through, though it must be noted that Congress will follow almost any President at almost any time who urges a tax cut. He promised that after cutting taxes and expenditures, and after boosting defenses, he would balance the budget. He hasn't. He thought supply-side economics would dry up the red ink. It didn't. It is no fun chiding Ronald Reagan, who is a nice man. But the question keeps intruding as the new Presidential year starts: can we trust his judgment? If not *his* judgment, then that of the triad around him?

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the stupidity and artlessness of the White House mistake in proposing to reinstate tax deductions for racially segregated private schools. If there was one can of dynamite certain to detonate, this was it. I don't think Reagan is racist. I can't prove it, but I believe that this segregated school decision was made without his knowledge, or at any rate with only a cursory gesture that he did not understand. (He now claims to know about it.) Edwin Meese sat on the decision for a week. The other triumvirs heard about it after the explosion. The reasons they gave to explain the mistake don't explain it. Is new legislation needed? The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights says no. This is serious because it affects Reagan's credibility. What about his judgment on all these other things?

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
FEBRUARY 3, 1982

A MODEST MIDEAST SHUTTLE

Henry Kissinger returned again and again to the Middle East because he was pessimistic. After his recent trip to Cairo and Jerusalem, Alexander Haig said he would soon be going back because he was optimistic—a foolhardy reaction, one feels instinctively. Hope is rarely vindicated in the region, and the odds are small it will be now.

The impasse in the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations aimed at achieving a definition of Palestinian autonomy has lasted for more than two and a half years. The differences between the two countries, moreover, are not superficial; and there comes a time when, even in diplomacy, "constructive ambiguity" is no longer useful. In the abstract, of course, it would enhance President Hosni Mubarak's standing in the world if he could produce from the current talks an operating interpretation of autonomy closer to ordinary notions of self-government than Menachem Begin is inclined to allow. But Mr. Begin's first concern is not how well Egypt's head of state is received in Riyadh; nor could this be the first concern of any Israeli Prime Minister, even the most dovish. The Israelis very much want Anwar Sadat's anointed successor to survive in the jungle of Arab politics, but they care more about the conditions and preconditions of their own survival: they live in the same jungle.

It is, to be sure, much in Israel's interest to have Egypt's signature on a mutually acceptable autonomy agreement; it would be especially reassuring to have that signature before the last and strategically most critical salient of the Sinai is evacuated by Israeli soldiers on April 25. If an accord could be reached with Mr. Mubarak on modalities for the West Bank and the Gaza, the Egyptians would seem to have recommitted themselves to the Camp David process, and to have done so precisely at the moment when all the wise pundits are saying they will take the money and run. Having reached an understanding with Israel on this vexing problem, Cairo might then feel inhibited about reneging on the "normalization" counts of Camp David simply because Jordan and the local Palestinians were unwilling to reach the same understanding over territory in which Egypt has no intrinsic interests.

The scenario that most haunts the Israelis is that, once Camp David has restored the Sinai to Egypt, Egypt will restore itself to the hostile Arab camp. The Egyptian record of honoring agreements—the Sinai demilitarization provisions of the 1949 armistice, the free passage and (again) demilitarization undertakings of 1957, the stand-still arrangement ending the "war of attrition" in 1970—is not a promising one. With this in mind, some of Mr. Begin's Israeli critics argued during the Camp David talks that Israel should link its phased withdrawal from the Sinai to concrete progress on the future of the other territories. "Linkage" is everywhere a controversial notion. Former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin warned that Israeli's Sinai evacuation in the absence of an agreement on the more difficult

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issues (that is, the most deeply contested lands) would be throwing away a crucial card, reducing Egypt's incentive to press the local Arabs to find some *modus vivendi* with Israel while simultaneously allowing Egypt to revert, without cost, to its traditional belligerent stance.

Mr. Begin wanted his peace with Egypt without any hard Israeli obligation beyond the Sinai withdrawal. The corollary of this is the not adequately appreciated fact that he took enormous risks for that peace. The question now is whether it will last and be enhanced. But Egypt has exactly what its self-esteem requires: its lost territory. If Cairo does not proceed fully with the normalization of relations in trade, tourism, culture, arid zone development, etc., envisioned in the Camp David treaty (and the signs on this score are not especially happy either), there is little that Israel can do. It would only add to the asymmetry of Mr. Begin's deal with Mr. Sadat (vast territory for easily revokable diplomatic relations) to force Israel to pay—in the weighty currency of Judea and Samaria—for Egyptian compliance with its own undertakings.

The main problem with concessions to Egypt on the status of the West Bank and Gaza is that anything Cairo agrees to binds neither the King of Jordan nor the local Palestinians. They don't want to negotiate or are afraid to—afraid not of Israel but of the PLO, with which Israel won't negotiate. The logical flaw of Camp David is that it makes Israel grant concessions to a negotiating partner who cannot produce very much, if anything at all, in the area of dispute: the streets of Nablus and Hebron and Jenin. This is why most Israelis are reluctant to spell out what they might be willing to relinquish on the West Bank and under what conditions. They feel it will bring them nothing in return.

ALL THE SAME, Israel will be under enormous pressure, not least from the U.S., to show some flexibility on the West Bank and to show it to Egypt. The Begin government would do well not to put up a last-ditch resistance on procedural issues. What Israel needs to do most of all is to demonstrate anew that its conception of Palestinian autonomy is not so niggardly that it offers the local Arabs nothing by way of political expression for their emerging national identity. If Israel does that, and in a more generous fashion than what the Begin cohort may be capable of, it will gain (or regain) for itself a respectful hearing on its more fundamental contention—which is that strategic considerations, considerations of life and death, cannot permit the simple imposition of a volatile and violence-prone Arab sovereignty in the tiny two-by-four that separates the Jordan River from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

The bitter truth is that there is no easy solution to the long-festering conflict between Jew and Arab in the Holy Land. Even with the best goodwill on both sides, a just and mutually acceptable formula would still be elusive. In these circumstances, Americans might contemplate the heresy that some problems may actually be intractable. It follows from this that the U.S. not be profligate with its prestige and energy in pursuit of what may, in the end, be unattainable.

This means that the State Department's search for one decisive *deus ex machina* in the Middle East should finally be brought to a decent end, and that urgency itself cease being regarded as a strategy. Yet the present situation is untenable for all concerned: humiliating for the Arabs, morally corrosive for the Israelis, and a geopolitical nightmare for caretakers of the American interest. To steer a course between promising the impossible and yielding to the intolerable is, then, the task of U.S. policymakers. For others, maybe, the gratifying and futile pronunciamentos about self-determination; for us, by way of contrast, the tentative experiment and the incremental improvement. Probably this means that when finally there is peace between Israel and her neighbors, that peace will reflect the complexities on the ground; it will be expressed in legal and political formulations now only barely discernible to the peacemakers and the combatants alike.

The Palestinians may continue to win votes at the U.N. for their dreams of old maps, but these will not loosen the Israeli grip on an inch of contested land. As long as the Arabs indulge themselves in the fantasy of maximal solutions, Israelis will cling to an ever harder line. There is, moreover, an ebb and flow in the history of national movements. The popularity of the Palestinian cause largely reflects the present power of petroleum and the petrodollar in the international economic order. But these will not always be what they are today. Already there are signs, even in the third world and at the U.N., of defections from the axiomatic Arab camp. If the Arabs, and particularly the Arabs living under Israel's rule, do not soon seek to win what at least the most conciliatory Israelis are willing to discuss, it is not hard to imagine the Palestinian cause becoming as faint as that of the Kurds and the Tibetans. Sooner or later the Israelis will have a prime minister who is not, by his own actions, continually making the Palestinian case. The question of Palestine, so called, will simply become, in the callous way of the world, boring.

THE ARAB grievance needs to be met; but it cannot be met at the cost of exposing the Israeli citizenry to the historic violence of Arab society. Whatever Israel's administration may have failed to achieve since 1967 by way of fostering habits of coexistence in the territories, it has ensured the reasonable safety of its own populace. That terrorists may penetrate the protections of civil society, as Palestinian terrorists have claimed credit for doing in the murder of the American military attaché in Paris, is one of the bitter facts of the age; that they have done so against Israel, sometimes in spectacular ways, only reinforces the

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determination of their targets and victims to keep the gunmen and bombthrowers on the other side of the Jordan and Litani rivers. That much Israel is entitled to insist upon, and to resent and resist any facile compromise likely to be payable in Jewish blood. But the fanatic Mr. Begin must be made to understand—and if that understanding eludes his grasp, those of his more stable associates must be given to understand—that the U.S. will not underwrite any further gratuitous and unilateral changes in the political status of lands long recognized as belonging to other states. The Israeli Prime Minister's contempt for the Arab sensibility is also contempt for the American role in the world. No less than the Palestinians, Mr. Begin's faction needs to be disabused of its hankering after old maps. That is the minimum price of the American connection.

There is also a price that Egypt, now the single largest beneficiary of American economic and food aid in the world, must be willing to pay for its lifeline to the U.S. President Mubarak must be made to understand, in advance, that this minimum price is rejection of the temptations and blandishments the oil that Arabs will dangle before Egypt to persuade it to desert Camp David. The promise of Camp David may be less than it was when the treaty was first signed. But it is all that there is providing a framework for discussions and an evolutionary process toward an expanded peace. It is all that stands between the people of the region and war. As long, then, as Camp David is alive, there is some justification for Secretary Haig's optimism.

NOTEBOOK

☐ SHARP-EYED READERS will detect a subtle change in the look of our typefaces this week. For the past seven years, THE NEW REPUBLIC was phototypeset and made camera-ready by its own small company, 19th Street Graphix. Reaganomics has forced a change, and, beginning with this issue, our copy is set by a larger firm, Unicorn Graphics. To Kathy Sullivan and her 19th Street cohorts (Marlene Davis, Kenny Grady, Julie Humke, George Kibler, John O'Neill, and Lila Ward), we bid farewell and thanks. Their work was never less than excellent, but we'll miss their warmth, humor, and sense of proportion even more.

☐ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Next week plenipotentiaries of all the sovereign states of the world assemble at Geneva to negotiate limitation of armaments. Hardly anyone is optimistic enough to think they will succeed." ("Behind the Scenes at Geneva," editorial, February 3, 1932.)

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

GERALD R. REAGAN

DURING THE first year of his Presidency, Ronald Reagan did his best to defy three pieces of Washington conventional wisdom and another piece of wisdom that is not so conventional but should be. The first three are: 1) you can't run the White House without a single strong chief of staff; 2) you can't run the government without the White House dominating the Cabinet; and 3) you can't run foreign policy without a dominant Secretary of State or national security adviser. The fourth is that no matter who is elected, Gerald Ford is always President. That is, no matter how ideologically motivated a candidate is, political pressures in this pluralistic democracy inevitably push policy toward the center.

Much as Reagan might try to continue fighting it, indications are that conventional wisdom is winning out. James Baker III is emerging as the dominant figure on the White House staff. The Cabinet is beginning to show signs of drifting away from White House control, and moves are under way to tighten things up. Alexander Haig, in an astounding comeback from the edge of ruin, now dominates foreign policy. And the whole of Administration policy, while certainly conservative, is far more moderate than one might have expected from Ronald Reagan's campaign rhetoric. Needless to say, the far right is furious.

The conventional wisdom about White House staffs arises, of course, from the experience of recent Presidents, all of whom ended up having a dominant chief of staff despite their early intentions to foster collegiality among advisers. Reagan defied this tradition by installing his triumvirate of Meese, Baker, and Deaver, to handle policy, machinery, and scheduling, respectively. Except during the President's August vacation in California, when the three seemed to lose touch with one another, the system has worked surprisingly well. Yet though the three continue to meet first thing each morning, then confer with the President together, and then talk to each other constantly all day long, signs of tension and discord have begun to show lately. Power seems to be flowing from Meese to Baker.

Meese has committed three major mistakes. He failed to wake up the President when U.S. jets shot down Libyan planes in the Gulf of Sidra last summer, which reportedly angered not only Deaver and Baker but also Mrs. Reagan, who felt her husband had been embarrassed. Meese also set up the weak National Security Council apparatus which nearly cost the President his reputation for mastery over Congress (in the Awacs fight) and which came to be opposed by Baker, Deaver, and practically the entire national security establishment in and out of government. When

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William Clark replaced Richard V. Allen as national security adviser and Clark was given direct access to Reagan, Meese lost half his policy empire. One White House aide said the change would "free Ed up for what he's best at—conceptual thinking." This is the bureaucratic-power equivalent of, "yes, but she has a great personality." Then, on Meese's first outing as chief of domestic policy, he helped get the President into the travesty which is referred to at the White House as "the Jones case"—the decision to allow tax exemptions for segregated private schools (including Bob Jones University in South Carolina).

On top of all this, Meese is the repeated target of press reports that his real interests lie outside the White House—in California politics, at the Justice Department, at the head of the FBI, at Defense. He may be in solid with the President, and the President is saying so, but the pressure on Meese is building. Meanwhile, Deaver has announced that financially he can't afford to spend four years in his job as deputy chief of staff, and Baker's authority is increasing.

MEESE is in charge of Cabinet affairs for the White House, but lately it is Baker who has been taking the lead in dealing with the onset of conventional wisdom No. 2—the gradual drift of Cabinet members toward their interest groups and bureaucracies, necessitating White House measures to reestablish central authority. The Cabinet was dutiful, even enthusiastic, about Reagan's first round of budget cuts, but this year's budget process was characterized by a gush of leaks designed to arouse constituency groups against further slashing. An additional leak war broke out before Christmas between supply siders at the Treasury Department and deficit-watchers at the Office of Management and Budget. Baker took the lead in putting out instructions—largely observed—that the President be allowed to make his budget and tax decisions in private. Baker was also the author of the memo to the Cabinet requiring coordination with the White House before Cabinet members make "major media appearances." The purpose was to stop the White House from being surprised at statements made by officials of the government and to ensure that Cabinet members were saying what the White House wanted said.

A major question about eventual power relationships in the Administration is William Clark. Some observers think that Reagan's onetime California chief of staff will gradually turn into a powerful all-purpose adviser, not just the chief foreign policy coordinator. That remains to be seen. For the present, Clark has moved quickly to take command of the White House national security operation. He immediately promulgated National Security Decision Directives Nos. 1, 2, and 3, canceling certain old Carter directives, formalizing the Reagan national security structure, and establishing a new anti-leak policy for classified information.

In trying to counteract classified leaks, Clark was performing a mission Reagan thinks is important. Contrary to some reports, White House aides say, Reagan does read the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the White House news summary every day, and does watch the evening TV news programs, and all too often he complains bitterly at morning staff meetings about leaks. The worst recent ones, say aides, concerned the decision to sell F-5E jets to Taiwan at a time when consultations with China were still under way, and the word that Libyan "hit" squads were after the President and other government officials. The Libyan leak was so bothersome that Baker ordered a special study, conducted by Johanna Bistany of the White House Communications Office. It concluded that FBI and/or CIA officials were responsible for the initial leaks and that White House officials tried at first to keep the problem quiet, but that once the word was out, White House officials joined in the leaking. The White House stoutly denies—and officials claim that the study shows—that there was never a concerted Administration campaign to use the "hit squad" story as a propaganda device to discredit Libya. Jack Nelson of the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Reagan is so livid about leakage that he actually suggested a policy banning officials from conducting interviews on "background" or "off the record." He was finally persuaded that this would be unworkable, but it is not clear yet how restrictive (or effective) the Clark alternative will be, requiring as it does advance clearance for interviews in which classified information may be discussed and authorizing "all legal methods" to be used in tracking down leakers after the fact.

ANOTHER of Clark's early successes was in persuading U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick to stay on the job through the 1982 General Assembly session this fall. Kirkpatrick is understood to detest the U.N., with its fixations on Palestine and South Africa and its unwillingness to face up to Communist aggression. She also has policy differences with the Administration, believing that the U.S. has been harder on Israel over the Golan annexation and the bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor than it has been on the Soviet Union over the repression of Poland. She is said to object, particularly, that the U.S. did not take the issue of Poland to the U.N. Security Council. In a speech last December at the American Enterprise Institute, she described the present period as "perhaps the most perilous in our history," but she is said to privately think that present U.S. policy is flaccid, dominated by a State Department careerist mentality that the goal of diplomacy is to "yield firmly." Worn down from traveling between Washington and New York, Kirkpatrick wanted to switch jobs and become national security adviser, and she launched a strong campaign for the post. After she lost, the prospect of returning to the U.N. seemed even more bleak, friends say, and she

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planned to leave the government until Clark dissuaded her.

In spite of his activity, Clark is far from being in charge of American foreign policy, and most experts doubt he has the background and knowledge ever to assume such a role. Instead, Haig is now in charge in a way that seemed impossible only a few months ago, when his explosive temper was causing him grave problems with the White House. Possibly because Clark, an ally, is now at the White House instead of Allen, a rival, Haig reportedly seems less nervous and distracted than before. He has won some crucial fights over policy and personnel. He got foreign service careerists Walter Stoessel and Lawrence Eagleburger elevated to the No. 2 and No. 3 positions at State. He persuaded Reagan to adopt a policy of gradually mounting sanctions against Poland and the Soviet Union, rather than the abrupt cutoff of grain and trade favored by hardliners. And he won a compromise on aircraft for Taiwan. Haig's position in the Administration is likely to be even stronger if, as expected, Clark picks a close friend of Haig's from the Nixon-Ford White House, State Department Counselor Robert C. McFarlane, to be his deputy on the NSC staff.

Reagan's policies on the Soviet Union, arms control, China, and even Central America and Africa are conservative, anti-Communist, and anti-radical, but they are all far more moderate than Republican rhetoric during the 1980 campaign. So, in some areas, is domestic policy, although liberals and beneficiaries of government aid programs find that hard to believe. Concentrating on economic recovery, Reagan has not taken a leading role on abortion, prayer in schools or other social issues. When the import of his "Jones case" decision was made clear to him, he moved to reverse it in Congress. All this tends to validate the Gerald Ford principle that politics (or perhaps reality) pushes policy toward the middle. The principle applied to Carter, certainly, who wanted to chop seven billion dollars from defense, impose big cuts on nuclear weapons, control big oil companies, and enact liberal tax reform, only to finally raise defense, accept Ford's basic SALT plan, decontrol oil prices, and target tax cuts to corporations. Reagan's defense increases may not end up much bigger than Carter's, reality may force excise and other tax increases this year, and though natural gas decontrol may be speeded up, it's likely to include a windfall profits tax.

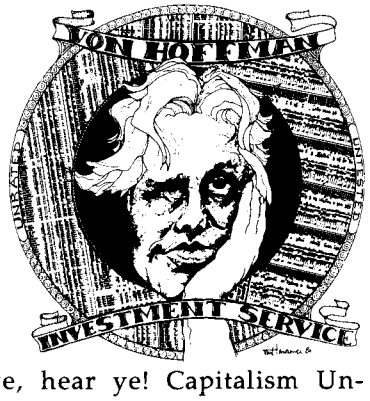
All this has the right in a frenzy, and with the ascendancy of Haig and Baker and the demise of Allen, the super-conservatives are beginning to charge that Reagan has been "Bushified" or "Bush-whacked" in domestic policy and "Kissingerized" in foreign policy. The right-wing counteroffensive is beginning to have some effect, especially on State Department appointments. Reportedly the White House is resisting Haig's choice for Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, Robert Hormats, and has definitely ruled that political appointees will get two other open posts, those of Assistant Secretary for European Affairs and Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs. The power of the right is such that the best available candidate for the first post, former deputy NSC adviser William Hyland, has little chance because of old Kissinger connections. Even though the international organization job most logically should go to an experienced career diplomat—Rozanne Ridgeway, former Ambassador to Finland, was Kirkpatrick's and Haig's choice—the top candidates now include the chief of the White House advance office, Stephen Studdert, and presidential appointments secretary Gregory Newell, as well as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations, Alvin Drischler.

The likelihood is that the right will not stop with a few State Department scalps, but will mobilize to reclaim the President it evidently believes has been kidnapped by the people he defeated for the 1980 Republican nomination. The truth is that Reagan has been captured by the necessity to govern a big country in a complicated world at a difficult time. He is gradually choosing the best people around him to run things. If that means that moderate people and policies rise to the top, it won't be for the first time.

MORTON KONDRACKE

A FOOL AND HIS MONEY

OLD SUITS, NEW TIES



ACROSS THE LAND stockbrokers are ringing happy chimes on AT&T's Bell System. With the Justice Department settling the antitrust cases against the phone company and IBM, they got the sort of news that makes for the best tub-thumping and stock-jobbing—Hear ye, hear ye! Capitalism Unchained, Innovation Unleashed, Initiative Unbound! Leap on board the gravy train, the Eldorado Limited is on its way.

They should be selling a lot of stock with that pitch during the next few months, when we will see one optimistic story about the future after another, but whether you should be buying that stock is another question. It is something less than a foregone conclu-

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sion that Ma Bell, emancipated at last to compete with IBM and a score of other data transmitters, is going to do as well as the stock jobbers and the boomers will have you believe. Ma Bell hasn't competed with anybody since World War I. That's a long time; we can't know if the organization will have the spring and the hustle necessary to hold one's own in a field that changes so fast that repairmen are retrained every four months.

AT&T's history for incorporating and using invention and technology has been less than outstanding these past 60 years. After all, these are the boys and girls who invented the transistor. At Bell Labs it seems to have been regarded as a high-tech toy until a group of junketing Japanese engineers were shown the cute little crystals, and it immediately occurred to them they'd make tiny parts for teeny-weeny radios. Shaaazaaam! A new world was born, but AT&T has not had much to do with it.

The long-range results of earlier antitrust suits were probably much different from what any of the litigants had in mind when the suits were filed. The most famous of all, the turn-of-the-century Standard Oil suit, had been economically moot long before it was legally settled. Since the Rockefellers disdained oil exploration in such unpromising places as Texas, their trust got busted by the competition before the courts got around to administering the *coup de grâce*. Trusts in beef, tobacco, and other things appeared to have been felled not by lawyers but profit-maddened competition. Something of the same sort may have been happening with Bell, which was nibbled and nibbled over the past ten years by a variety of ducks in the data transmission business, the switchboard and equipment business, and the long-distance telephone business. Given another decade and those ducks might have dismembered the old lady without any help from John Law.

THE AT&T settlement is being touted by some as a sweetheart of a deal for Ma Bell. She gets to keep the good, super-profitable cookies like her Western Electric manufacturing arm and to dump the humphy-fumphy local service companies. That is why you can expect to see Bell stock take off. Therefore, if you buy it, do so now and be prepared to sell it fast, before the precise terms of the divestiture are announced. They may be less advantageous than people expect. They have to be, in fact, for when does life ever match our dreams? Ergo, sell while your fellow stockholders are in deep, deep REM.

When the breakup comes, be alert for some very good bargains with currently disdained local phone companies. Once they're spun off into independence, what's to prevent them from going into the cable TV business? They have every major city wired. Overnight, merely with a change of legal status, all homes may become cable homes, whereby your local phone company supplies not only that service but also electronic Yellow Pages, classified ads, and supermarket displays. Since cable messages can be transmitted over existing lines already going to your house, the phone company would not have to cough up the hundreds of millions of dollars, the lack of which are slowing down new cable installations. Moreover, with the local phone companies' investment in cable and wiring long since amortized, the just-hatched infant Bells will be able to make money while significantly underselling the competition. Just a buck or two will be added on to your monthly phone bill.

BE NIMBLE, be quick. Not only could these new local phone companies be much better investments than now predicted, but they could mangle the value of cable TV company stocks (like Time Inc., which is heavily into that business). They could also do a massive downward job on newspaper stock. If Pacific Bell can supply every family in southern California with electronic yellow pages and a complete, colored, advertising service, the *Los Angeles Times* won't have much left to sell except those long, not overly entertaining articles that hop, skip, and jump through endless pages of dull Sunday grayness. Broadcasting stock, ABC, CBS, Group W, Metromedia, etc., could take a vicious pummeling in the battle between the over-the-air transmitters and the phone company's cable operation. AT&T has been barred from direct consumer service areas like these just as much as from sending the indecipherable beeps, bips, and bytes of computerology.

The IBM outcome is less bullish. Unlike AT&T, the case's dismissal doesn't suddenly allow IBM to get into anything it wasn't already doing. It'll put a lot of expensive lawyers out of work, or so we can hope, and it should free a goodly chunk of top management from spending time on depositions and worrying about how this or that business move may be received at the Justice Department. But all of that is, to use a word they love in the computer business, peripheral.

If the musings of the business press are correct, the biggest result of dropping the antitrust case against IBM will be to let it go out and buy other companies. There are all kinds of reasons for buying other companies, including megalomania of the sort displayed by Mobil when it tried to buy U.S. Steel, peeved at the rusty Pittsburgh giant for buying Marathon Oil. You may buy a company because you want the natural resources it owns, as in the Du Pont purchase of Conoco. Or you may want to buy a company because it makes a lot of money, thereby incorporating what Wall Street calls a cash cow into your operations to give your balance sheet a spiffy look come the end of the fiscal year.

Yet another motive for a big company buying a little one is its desire to purchase technology. It is said that General Electric, for instance, hasn't been able to in-

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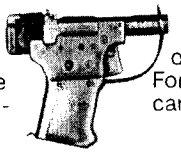

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vent anything new for years, and that its entire new product development program consists of swallowing technologically advanced minnows. Generally speaking, companies that are no longer able to devise sexy new products—GE's problem ever since Thomas A. Edison took late retirement—are arteriosclerotically mature. Their glory days are over.

So far that hasn't been the case with IBM, which, to outward appearances at least, drives itself very hard. This is not to say there aren't all kinds of competitively innovative nippers snapping at the big guy, but nobody in the industry combines such size, production volume, and, relatively speaking, advanced design. Nevertheless, it is hard to believe that IBM, even with its favorable court decision and acquisition of small companies with big new ideas, can become more of a

Nick's Picks... Bart's Charts

In the 19 months we've been picking and charting, we have seen two different Presidents pursuing widely divergent economic programs. This has left us with chronic inflation, rising unemployment that threatens to move into double digits, and record-high interest rates that have "moderated" only in the face of the second recession in as many years. So where does all this leave the TNR Fool Fund? Almost exactly where it began—except that our money now is worth about 15 percent less.

Although our lackluster performance isn't exactly cause for celebration, we are fortunate to have gotten through this exercise relatively unscathed. Most of our hypothetical investments are now worth only $60,000 to $80,000, a decline of 20 to 40 percent from the $100,000 we initially invested in each of them. In fact, only one of our current investments has increased in value, but we have managed to keep afloat because almost every month we have been able to sell one holding at a profit. Our most successful investments were pork bellies futures (up over $100,000), Thomas Nelson Publishers (up over $50,000), and Lexicon (up over $40,000). The only investment we had to sell for a serious loss was our live cattle futures, which dropped almost $80,000.

So what have we learned from our endeavors? The most obvious lesson is that for every good tip you get from those in the business of giving investment advice, there is an equally bum steer (no pun intended to our livestock debacle). Our Fool gave us several good leads, but he also advised us to buy many stocks when their values were up. Of our ten current holdings, seven have never been worth more than what we paid for them originally.

But making an investment which appreciates in value is only half the game. The other half is knowing when to get out, and our record here is mixed at best. The 99,000 shares of Lexicon, which we sold last month for $142,000, are now worth $310,000. Last year we watched our pork bellies decline from $664,000 to $215,000 before we finally sold them, whereupon they rose to $300,000. If we had held onto the pork bellies, however, our entire investment would have been wiped out the following month. Suffice it to say that maximizing one's return in the financial markets requires both a little wisdom and a lot of luck, and with hindsight it will always be possible to identify missed opportunities. Still, we took advantage of opportunities, too, selling four of our holdings at their high points, most notably Nucor and Thomas Nelson, each of which has declined about $150,000 in value since we unloaded it.

So, possessing only minimal wisdom and even less good fortune, we would have achieved great success with the Fool Fund only if the financial markets in general were moving upward. The time certainly seemed right for a big shift with Reagan and his probusiness policies moving into Washington. But instead the stock and bond markets have dropped to even lower levels, as economic forecasts point to growing government deficits which will keep interest rates high. Our money market fund, Dreyfus Liquid Assets, averaged 13 percent interest over the last month, its lowest return since November 1980, but the 15th consecutive month of double-digit interest. High interest rates are part of the strategy which uses recession as a tool to combat inflation. But though they have had only limited success thus far in moderating inflation, they have had considerable success in strangling business and investment—and the financial markets.

This leaves us, 19 months later, right where we began, no richer but perhaps a bit wiser.

	December 7	January 18
93 Beatrice Foods bonds	$ 72,656	$ 72,540
140 Resorts International bonds	86,800	81,200
11,250 shares MONY Mortgage	78,750	71,719
11,778 shares Templeton Growth Fund	89,513	83,270
2,250 shares Gulf Oil	84,656	72,844
7,400 shares Kinder-Care	93,425	104,525
2,800 shares Harte-Hanks	94,500	90,300
2,100 shares Southwest Airlines	61,425	60,900
13,000 shares Campbell Red Lake	107,250	79,625
11,000 shares Playboy	99,000	88,000
Dreyfus Liquid Assets	184,490	194,667
TOTAL	$1,052,465	**$999,590**

The final score (June 20, 1980 through January 18, 1982):

Consumer Price Index (estimated)	+15.4 percent
Dow Jones Industrial Average	−2.2 percent
TNR's Fool Fund	0.0 percent

Bart Rubenstein

Bart Rubenstein is general manager of *Channels* magazine.

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dominant force than it is. With all of the corporation's planning and prescience, it never saw the home-computer market coming, and has missed out on those billions.

If the brokers start blowing bugles for IBM, don't just turn a deaf ear—go the other way. Short the stock, as they say on the Wall, the narrow Street with a billion bucks and a million tales. Shorting a stock is betting that it will go down instead of going up. (A true profit hound knows that you make money because the price of a stock moves up or down. The direction doesn't matter as long as you bet right.) Your broker will explain to you exactly how you short a stock, even as he begs you not to do it, because it is gambling and you could lose all your money (although there are a number of ways that let you hedge your bet against a total wipe-out). Brokers hate bears—that is, people who short the market or bet on prices going down. The bear has always been regarded as a scrofulous, un-American type, a knocker, skeptic, a pessimist who lacks faith in our country and its people. Nevertheless, some great American fortunes have been founded by nasty papa bears like Joe Kennedy and Bernard Baruch. Still, in a culture that exalts and demands the blaring music of the 76 trombones cakewalking through River City, you have to have the grit-gutted personality of a sociopath to bet your money and base your prosperity on things going down and slipping from bad to worse.

IF YOU ARE of that sort, after you've finished selling AT&T and IBM short, you might similarly honor U.S. Steel. Having bought its oil company for about six and a half billion smackers, it must now pay for it—which will require the borrowing of more than two billion dollars and the paying of something in the neighborhood of a third of a billion in interest every year. The steel part of U.S. Steel isn't earning that kind of dough currently, but with what it should make, plus what Marathon will bring, the combined corporation ought to make its payments. It will be cash poor and there won't be much left for the stockholders, which is why, after the fun and the firecrackers, this is a stock to short. (One way to do that is to sell what they call "uncovered options." Pretend you sell a promise to deliver 100 shares of U.S. Steel at, say, $30 a share any time in the next six months. You are paid $3 a share or $300 for your promise. If the price goes up to $35 a share, you lose and will have to buy 100 shares at a loss of $500 to make good on your promise. But, since you had been paid $300, your actual out-of-pocket loss is only $200. But if U.S. Steel stock goes up $3 or less or stays the same or goes down, you win the bet and get to keep the $300.)

Given the basic drift of things, this isn't a bad time to sell America short, at least the stock market part of America. For the next few months things look bleak and blizzardy except to animals who like it when it's cold outside. It's dreary days unless you are a financial koala bear, a careful beast who can find the tender green and inexpensive shoots of young new companies with something fresh to offer that will do well even through recession times. (The two manufacturing industries that did have happy days during the Great Depression were the refrigerator and radio industries. Now home computers thrive when the rest looks dreary.)

Of course, as any White House society reporter will tell you, it doesn't look dreary for some people. Debutante balls are back, the millionaires' organza extravaganza, proud-spending daddies with their bubble-headed chickie poos and their blow-dried swains. A time of golden revulsion, a time to leave off writing about the market, to call this the Final Fool, and write a new continuing feature called "The Gilded Age."

NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

The Administration sidesteps the issue.

YELLOW RAIN DANCE

THE FIRST REPORTS came from Yemen more than 15 years ago, during the bloody civil war between the Saudi-backed royalists and the leftists supported by Egypt, then aligned with the Soviet Union. Red Cross field staffers and roving journalists told of smoke bombs dropped from Soviet planes which caused skin blisters, muscle spasms, hemorrhaging from the nose and mouth, and finally death. Autopsies and analyses of bomb fragments indicated that some kind of chemical agent had been used. The evidence of Soviet involvement, however, was circumstantial. In the late 1970s, outbreaks of the same symptoms were reported in Laos and Cambodia—again, it was said, the result of smoke released from Soviet-built aircraft. The people there called it "yellow rain," and estimate that as many as 50,000 people have died from it since 1976. But again, the evidence was speculative. Then last fall, on September 14, the Administration claimed to have found the smoking gun. In West Germany, Secretary of State Alexander Haig appeared before the Berlin Press Association and announced that the United States had obtained "physical evidence" that "the Soviet Union and its allies" were showering Southeast Asia with biochemical poisons.

In the five months that have passed since Haig made this startling statement, much evidence has emerged to support his charges—but it has all come from sources outside the government. Information made

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public by the State Department has aroused only skepticism in the press and in the scientific community. Because of the Administration's inept handling of the issue, attention has now shifted from the crucial question of Soviet chemical warfare and its foreign policy implications to speculation about whether the Reagan team has exaggerated its case.

The controversy centers on what the State Department calls its "physical evidence." In March 1981 the Administration obtained a leaf and twig sample from Cambodia within a day of an alleged yellow rain attack. Tests on the samples were completed in August and revealed large quantities of three deadly toxins which, the Administration claimed, did not occur naturally in Southeast Asia. Test results on three more samples—two from Laos—confirmed the government's findings. Moreover, Russian scientific literature showed that the Soviets had done much research on these toxins, including extensive studies into their mass production. In November the director of the State Department's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Richard Burt, announced decisively to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: "We [have] solved the mystery. We [have] fitted together the jigsaw puzzle that had bedeviled us for five years. . . . We now have the smoking gun."

"Jumping the gun is more like it," retorted a November 17 *New York Times* editorial. A closer look at the State Department's "physical evidence" showed that it was far from conclusive. For example, although it is doubtful that there are facilities in Southeast Asia capable of producing the toxins in the quantities they are reportedly being used, production on a small scale —just enough to doctor a few samples, say—is relatively easy. In fact, according to Philip Hilts of the *Washington Post*, anyone can purchase a do-it-yourself toxin kit by mail for $75. Since the Administration's case rested entirely upon the authenticity of the samples, the reliability of the source was crucial. The source of one sample turned out to be *Soldier of Fortune*, a sensationalist magazine for mercenaries and war-hungry Walter Mittys.

COMING:

Irving Howe

on Rudyard Kipling.

The Pentagon's three other samples were made "classified information." But this only gave rise to speculations that one or more of the samples had come from the nefarious Khmer Rouge. The overall effect was to discredit further the Administration's charges that the Soviets were responsible. And since none of the samples showed traces of any man-made chemical, a number of skeptical scientists disputed the government's claim that the poisons could not have occurred naturally. "Of the fifty trichothecenes [the type of toxin in question], these are the four that have been naturally occurring throughout the world," said Harvard's Matthew Meselson.

THE ONLY convincing evidence that the Russians are indeed spraying yellow rain comes from the ABC News documentary, "Rain of Terror." In October 1981, ABC's Steve Singer and Bill Redeker obtained their own sample from Charles Whitney, a former hospital administrator of a refugee camp in northeast Thailand. According to Whitney, Hmong tribesmen fleeing Laos had given him some yellow powder that had been collected from the site of an attack. ABC then turned the samples over to the Cambridge research consulting firm, Arthur D. Little, which had them analyzed by Dr. Charles Rosen of Rutgers University. Rosen found massive quantities of four biological toxins, including an agent which caused infertility and deformity of both male and female sexual organs. Also discovered was a man-made compound, industrially produced, which commonly is used in aerosols and herbicides to spread other ingredients. This ruled out the possibility that somehow these toxins had occurred naturally. In addition, ABC uncovered photographs of Soviet chemical depots and decontamination equipment in the area, and interceptions of Communist military radio transmissions mentioning Soviet chemical warfare, and filmed an account of a Communist defector who actually flew the gassing missions. Within three months, ABC put together more information linking chemical warfare to the Soviet Union than the State Department, apparently, has done in five years. So weak is the case made public by the Administration in comparison, and so ineptly has it been handled, that one wonders whether the government ever intended the story to be anything more than a short-term propaganda weapon.

Why would the Administration take such a hard stance on such soft evidence? State Department officials profess to have information comparable to ABC's and more, but maintain they can't make it public without threatening the security of their sources. Their intention, they say, was to draw international attention to yellow rain. They cite as proof of their sincerity their recent successful efforts to extend the U.N.'s investigation of chemical warfare in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. Yet, according to one well-placed intelligence source, the Administration made a

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conscious decision to downplay the issue. Haig was originally scheduled to make his speech at the U.N., but the State Department feared that foisting yellow rain on the world body would prove "too provocative." Instead, the department decided to go public with the story in Berlin, where reaction to America's decision on the neutron bomb was at its peak. The Administration apparently felt that the issue might dampen European neutralism in the short term, and hoped it would not create any major policy headaches in the long term.

This is not as implausible as it sounds. For the Soviets to have produced and stockpiled biochemical weapons, let alone to have used them, would be a direct violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention. Such an egregious disregard of international treaties would no doubt throw the whole idea of effective arms control negotiations into question. "In the big picture, SALT and the USSR are far more important than a couple of hundred thousand Hmongs in an area where we don't have any interest," said the source.

Whatever the reason for the Administration's reluctance to support its charges, there is a logical inconsistency in the way the Administration handled the affair which points to a grave lack of forethought. As late as last November, Richard Burt told members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: "It is still too early to determine the full consequences of the use of chemicals and toxin warfare agents for future arms control arrangements." If the Administration had not thought out the implications, why go public in September with so strident a tone and so conclusive a statement? If it is serious about its charges, why not back them up with the "physical evidence" it has boasted of possessing? Why has the Administration hardly mentioned yellow rain since November?

As has happened frequently over the last year in matters of foreign policy, the Administration has discredited itself by making brash accusations without providing enough information to support them. Yellow rain has become a nonissue by appearing to be nothing more than an anti-Soviet propaganda weapon. There is currently enough evidence outside the government to suspect that yellow rain is not an exaggeration. The Soviet Union's vociferous opposition to extending the U.N.'s investigation only bears this out. Assuming Reagan is serious about the importance of arms control negotiations, as he clearly is about the dangers posed by the Soviets, he should pursue the yellow rain issue more vigorously and defuse the controversy that his own Administration created.

MICHAEL A. LERNER

The beautiful and bitter end of Europe.

IN DARKEST TRANSYLVANIA

BY JOHN LUKACS

WHEN I TELL my American friends that I traveled in Transylvania, their response is predictable, automatic, universal: "Dracula!" with a grin. I am irritated by this example of the dismal influence of movies on entire categories of American knowledge—or, rather, anti-knowledge. "Dracula" was a Wallachian tribal chief who had little to do with Transylvania. His "castle" was outside Transylvania. For 14 years he was imprisoned by King Mathias of Hungary, who was the real ruler of Transylvania then. In that gilded prison, "Dracula" (this means Little Devil in Rumanian; his real name was Vlad Tepes, the Impaler) allegedly gave up his Byzantine Orthodox religion to become a Roman Catholic in exchange for his freedom. This was the worst of the sins that the Russian historian Kuritsyn (one of the first chroniclers of Dracula's cruelties) held against him; but then, Kuritsyn was the favorite chronicler of the immediate predecessors of Ivan the Terrible. The Russians did not like the Rumanians then and do not like them now, and the mistrust is mutual. The real trouble in Transylvania, however, is not between the Russians and Rumanians but, as we shall see, between Rumanians and Hungarians.

Transylvania is a beautiful region, a beautiful part of Europe. I write "part of Europe," because this is essential, the key to its history, to the very configuration of its landscape and of its shapes, of its colors and scents, and of the taxonomy of its flora and fauna, including the human fauna. Transylvania had its high Middle

John Lukacs is the author of *The Last European War* and *1945: Year Zero* (Doubleday) and *Philadelphia: Patricians and Philistines, 1900-1950* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

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Ages, cathedrals, Cistercians, a whiff of the Renaissance, its Reformation, its Counter Reformation, its Baroque, its Enlightenment—the historical ages that made Europe, entire historical ages that did not exist in Russia or in Rumania, Moldavia, Oltenia, Wallachia, Bessarabia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Thrace, Greece, the Ukraine.

Before Vienna the Alps peter out. But there are other mountains in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, the largest among them the Carpathians. They form three-quarters of a ring around old Hungary, fir-laden dark mountains, not as young as the Alps but not very old either, black-green with sunlit clearings, mysterious rather than ominous, sparsely populated even now. On the map they resemble a tightly coiled wreath of the hair of an Eastern European peasant girl, girding the Danube basin as the girl's hair engirds her head. Eleven hundred years ago the Magyars (a name that I prefer to Hungarians) came into that basin. Its eastern portion was the land of the forests, Transylvania, Erdely, Ardeal.

TO SUM up the history of Transylvania in a page, or even a dozen pages, is nearly impossible: it is one long series of exceptions. The Magyars were, and are, exceptions, in a sense that they do not belong to any of the principal European ethnic families they have lived among—Germans and Slavs and Latins; and the Székely, the main Magyar tribal people in Transylvania, were exceptions among the exceptions. The Rumanians, too, are exceptional people: they claim to be descended from the near-mythical Dacians and from Trajan's Roman legions, which is near-nonsense. What is not nonsense is that their language is clearly neo-Latin, though for long centuries the Rumanian script was Old Slavonic, and until nearly 200 years ago, the few Rumanian books were printed in Cyrillic. The Turks conquered almost all of the Balkans, including Wallachia and Moldavia (there was no "Rumania" then) during the 15th century. They conquered half of Hungary during the 16th. Yet they did not penetrate into Transylvania; the Magyars fended them off. On two or three occasions the hot rake of war ran up several Transylvanian valleys, and Turks and Tatars ravaged scores of villages, but for nearly two centuries Transylvania was something of an independent state, governed for most of that time by Magyar princes. Transylvania existed between East and West. Its status then had remarkable similarities to that of Finland since World War II. The rest of Europe noticed this, exercised by a recurrent fear of the Turks. As in the case of modern Finland, the civilization of Transylvania was remarkable: there was religious toleration, decreed in 1560, and for most of the time Catholics and Protestants lived peaceably together. (William Penn knew this: impressed by the extant example of religious toleration, his original idea was to name his American Quaker colony "Transylvania.")

At the end of the 17th century the Turks left Hungary and the western fringe of Transylvania (though not Wallachia and Moldavia—that is, present Rumania). Transylvania reverted to a province of Hungary, which, in turn, was a semi-independent province of the Hapsburg Empire. The Rumanian population grew: Rumanians came through the mountain passes, getting away from the Turks, coming into that (often empty and open) land of the forests. In 1918, Transylvania, for the first time in its history, was given to Rumania—the gift of Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau, those pettiest and most hapless of the bourgeois statesmen of the 20th century.

There are now about 2.1 million Magyars in Transylvania, amounting to perhaps one-third of the population. The Magyars have not been a very prolific people. They are badly suppressed by the Rumanians. Before 1918 the Magyar treatment of the Rumanians was not exemplary either, but the present kind of suppression is different. There are relatively few political prisoners in Rumania now, but the secret police is ubiquitous, more ubiquitous than in any Eastern European country excluding the Soviet Union—and, as Rumanians themselves will tell you, the Soviet Union is not really a European country. The number of Magyar schools is systematically diminished by the government. The largest university, until recently bilingual, is now entirely Rumanianized. The Magyar faculties are gone, though here and there Magyar professors linger on. This is in Cluj-Napoca, the largest city in Transylvania, which was originally Kolozsvár in Magyar (Klausenburg in German), then it became Cluj in Rumanian, and lately it has been renamed Cluj-Napoca, a resurrection of a Roman place-name from the time of the Emperor Trajan. Official Rumanian propaganda and official Rumanian historiography claim that the Rumanians are direct descendants of Trajan's legions, which is as if Ronald Reagan were to declare his descent from Pocahontas. Yet many Rumanians have something mock-Latin about them; they are curiously reminiscent of the mock-European quality of Argentinians.

The broadcast and television slots allotted to the Magyar language on the Rumanian state network are distressingly brief, and hardly more than official Rumanian propaganda. The speakers and the interviewed and the musicians must identify themselves as "we Rumanians." In the predominantly, and sometimes purely, Magyar villages and towns, all of the inscriptions are in Rumanian—bilingual signs and directions are not allowed at all. Those Magyars who succeed in struggling up through the bureaucracy to acquire diplomas or qualifying degrees are given jobs in Wallachia, Moldavia, Oltenia, and Bucharest. There have been cases when patients in state hospitals in Magyar towns and with a Magyar staff were forbidden to talk to their doctors in Magyar.

On the Rumanian side of the frontier with Hungary,

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the wait is three hours. There are not more than seven or eight cars in line, but the hoods and the trunks have to be opened, the seats are pried apart, the luggage taken out and deposited on concrete slabs of benches. It is not my American passport that entitles me to a bit more courtesy from the Rumanian customs men, but the fact that I have only one piece of luggage; the other cars are crammed with people, children, and packages of food that they bring into Rumania. The Rumanian police are looking for foreign books, including books from Hungary, which are confiscated. I was warned about that in Budapest and left my books behind, but on top of my clothes there is an offprint of an article by a Magyar medievalist, printed in a German scholarly journal, about the commercial and diplomatic relations of the Caucasian principalities with the city-state of Genoa during the 15th century. The Rumanian customs people pore over this for 20 minutes, they take it into their booth, they study it. They return it to me, and one of them asks: "Where is this Georgia?" "A republic of the Soviet Union," I say. He is reluctant to believe me, but then he returns my passport and waves me on.

MAP BY KENNETH GRADY FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

This is the frontier between two Communist states, two Eastern European states, two member states of the Warsaw Pact. The difference between them is enormous. Passing back into Hungary—and this is southeastern Hungary, a relatively poor portion of the country—I am instantly back in the West. The difference between Rumania and Hungary is much greater than that between "Communist" Hungary and "Western" Austria. This is not merely the difference between two states, but between two nations and two cultures—indeed, the deepest boundary is not on the map. It is unmarked and yet immediately palpable, there between peoples: the boundary between Roman Catholic Europe and Byzantine Europe, between Western Christianity and Eastern Orthodoxy. (The fact that many of the Magyars in Transylvania are Calvinist shows that in Transylvania the exception is the rule.)

I could regale my American friends and readers with stories about Rumanian corruption: the official who exchanges currency, but who wants a tip; the "luxury" hotel which has (finally) a bath, but which will not furnish a stopper for the tub except for extra consideration; the fundamental difference between the cleanliness of the places populated by Magyars and those populated by Rumanians. I won't continue, because my readers will already be saying that, of course, this writer is a Hungarian and that explains everything. I cannot help this. I am a Magyar but I am an American too, and I am writing for Americans. The most important thing in Transylvania, as perhaps everywhere else in the world, is this existence of deep national differences, something that is obscured not only by ideologues (including those of anti-Communism) and by their appalling ignorance of geography and of history, but by the dominant social-scientific pattern of academic and bureaucratic thinking that dismisses national character as a reactionary 19th-century myth.

What is happening in Transylvania (and what is happening to many other places in Eastern Europe) has little to do with Communism or anti-Communism. What is even more significant, it has almost nothing to do with the Russians. As a matter of fact, during the Russian occupation of Transylvania, the Magyar population was treated a little better; the Russian rulers wanted no trouble in that regard. As the Russian flood receded from Rumania the atavistic inclinations rose again, and the crude suppression of the Magyar population reappeared. The principal, and sometimes courageous, spokesmen for the Magyar people are members of the Rumanian Communist Party, who on occasion are persecuted and dismissed from their jobs.

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Whether or not you are a Communist makes little difference in Transylvania. What counts is whether you are Rumanian or Magyar; or, to be more precise, whether you are anti-Magyar or pro-Magyar, regardless of your party membership, regardless even of your native language.

In many of the Magyar apartments and houses the radio is tuned to Budapest. The news from Radio Budapest does its little bit for pro-Soviet obeisances and propaganda, but for the Transylvania Magyars this hardly matters at all; it is so much more objective than the Rumanian radio. "Sometimes we listen to Budapest, sometimes to Radio Free Europe," they say. "It hardly makes any difference."

Rumania used to be the richest agricultural country in Europe. The American fliers who were shot down over Ploesti in 1943 and then parachuted in were amazed at how well they were fed. They were the only prisoners in World War II who gained ten to twenty pounds in one year of captivity. The Communist regime depleted the land. The oil wells, the largest deposits in Europe west of Russia, are running dry. The fields are speckled by children in blue smocks; classes in the fall are ordered out to gather potatoes. The state of the economy is as bad as Poland's. As in Poland, the shops are empty; people often do not bother to stand in line. In most restaurants there are no menus. The waiter will tell you what there is to eat, and the food is foul.

THE REGIME, however, is fairly solid and strong, and not only because of the secret police. In Rumania, not unlike the Soviet Union, the government is seen by the masses as a necessary evil, an unquestionable force of nature. The Rumanian government caters to mass sentiment by feeding it nationalism, suppressing the Magyars, and on occasion making sly references about the Russians. Thus the most rigid Communist regime in Eastern Europe is also the least pro-Russian one. The dictator of Rumania is Nicolae Ceauşescu, a former cobbler, whose wife and whose numerous relatives occupy dozens of the highest posts in the government. His private train has 12 cars. He had himself photographed with a jeweled scepter in hand; as well as standing over the carcasses of wild boars and bears which he shoots as they are driven before his august presence. He was also photographed dancing the Rumanian *hora* with Richard Nixon. The grinning, dark, and jowly faces of the Californian and Wallachian Presidents, both chief executives from the edges of civilization, oddly resembled each other.

The Eastern European landscape is now that of a valley where the flood and the fog are receding, and the ancient towers and turrets, broken and begrimed but nonetheless recognizable and standing, slowly emerge from under the fog. This devolution is promising and should not surprise anyone except for ideologues and theorists of international relations. Yet it is not as simple as that. In Russia, too, the towers and the turrets of Old Russia reappeared when much of the red chaotic fog of the Lenin-Trotsky years was wafting away. Yet in the streets of that Russian scene appeared not the New Soviet Man, but a people reminiscent of something old and dark, as was their leader, a new reincarnation of Ivan the Terrible. In Rumania, too, Ceauşescu is reminiscent of something old and rooted in the dark recesses of Balkan history, of those Wallachian and Moldavian *voivods* who knew the Byzantines and the Turks and how to get along with them or against them, depending on circumstances, people whose calculations of power were in their blood, and compared to whose life stories Machiavelli's *The Prince* was only an elegant theory spun out by a rationalist skeptic.

BUT DRACULA was not a Transylvanian, and Transylvania is different. There is the Saxon minority, for example. As early as in the 13th century, the kings of Hungary invited Germans to settle in Transylvania. The latter called themselves the Saxons. They were an early variant of the bourgeoisie; they built admirable and industrious lives in their towns. They lived a tight little existence, disliking the Magyars and despising the Rumanians. With the Reformation they discovered their German nationalism in an instant and became the grimmest Lutherans in all Christendom. Four hundred years later they were proudest followers of the Führer. As I drive through a village, a young boy in lederhosen, seeing my Viennese license plate, gives the Hitler salute.

All over Eastern Europe after World War II, the Germans were deported to Germany. The Rumanians did not deport them (though many of the Saxons left for West Germany through the years). An intelligent Rumanian told me several years ago: "Who knows? The Germans may become a great power again." There is that Hollywoodian witticism about the Hungarian who enters behind you in a revolving door and comes out ahead. Nothing could be further from the truth. Hungarians, with all of their talents, are the least able politicians. The political history of Hungary is marked by a series of disasters. It is the Rumanians who are masters at politics. Here are a few examples from our contemporary history.

To a certain extent, the modern Rumanian state had been a creation of France, but when France fell in 1940 the Rumanians turned pro-German more quickly, and more shamelessly, than any other state and people in Europe. Well before the Third Reich demanded compliance with "the final solution," the Rumanian Iron Guard hanged elderly Jews on butcher-hooks in the side streets of Bucharest. They murdered, among others, Professor Iorga, the nationalist historian, whose only sin was his Francophilia. (Before killing him they tore out his beard, hair by hair). Now, 40 years later,

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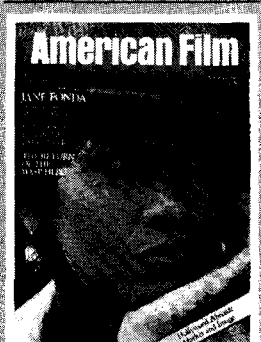

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Iorga is respected anew; and some of the former Iron Guardist historians occupy chairs in the Rumanian universities. Marshall Antonescu, a Rumanian patriot of considerable character and stature, succeeded in crushing the Iron Guard with Hitler's tacit approval; as a matter of fact, Hitler respected Antonescu even during their last interview in August 1944, when Antonescu suggested to Hitler that Rumania must now follow her own interests. As early as 1943 the Antonescu government made all kinds of secret arrangements with American Jewish organizations. The awful pogroms, perpetrated by Rumanians themselves in 1940 and 1941, were forgotten; the time had come to curry favor with the winning side.

IN AUGUST 1944 the Rumanians executed the most successful *coup d'état* during World War II. With an entire German army in their midst, they turned around within 24 hours and proclaimed their alliance with the Soviet Union, Britain, and the United States. (Again the comparison with Italy is instructive: compared to this acrobatic feat, the descendants of Machiavelli were mere bunglers.) A few months later the Rumanians installed a pro-Soviet government in full compliance with Stalin's wishes. Stalin gave them their reward: all of Transylvania was put back under Rumanian administration, the way it had been under the Francophile kings and the capitalists of Rumania. And just as two, three, or six centuries ago the behavior of certain Wallachian chieftains was the surest indication whether Ottoman power in the Balkans was waxing or waning, Ceaușescu's gestures of independence from Russia, the first of which were made 17 years ago, indicated that the Russian influence in Eastern Europe was becoming less ubiquitous and fearsome.

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It is because of this Rumanian political genius that the political future of my native people in Transylvania is largely hopeless. There may be an occasional member of Congress with Hungarian-American constituents who will insert an occasional item in the *Congressional Record*; there may be an article or two in *Le Monde* (for the first time in more than one hundred years, informed opinion in France is no longer one-sidedly pro-Rumanian); but a change in the Rumanian sovereignty over Transylvania, or that noble dream, an independent and autonomous Transylvania, is so remote that it doesn't even qualify as a possibility. The Magyar sovereignty is gone for good, and even some of its stones and turrets are destroyed.

I drove off on a side road to look at Bonchida, the baroque country house of the Bánffys, of the Transylvanian Magyar nobility (which was, with few exceptions, the most liberal and cosmopolitan of perhaps all Central and Eastern European aristocracies). They left in 1944. The Rumanians had gypsies settle in the house. I lived through the war in the middle of Europe, but I had never seen destruction such as this. Untouched by artillery or by bombs, the interior of the house has been scoured down to the bare brick, the very plaster scraped from the walls, and the Italian putti from the parapets smashed to pieces, lying in the rank grass. Unlike Dracula's "castle" (which the Rumanians have now built to attract American tourists—there is a "Dracula Tour," a Rumanian variety of Disneyland), places like Bonchida can never be restored.

YET HISTORY is unpredictable, which means that the texture of history changes. The obvious alternatives disappear, and new conditions arise, on another level. Culture is no longer a luxury, the possession of a minority; on certain levels of life it is replacing politics, and it becomes the precious possession of many, not only of a few. Life goes on among the Magyars of Transylvania, who are a bitterly serious people. They write their books (published in Bucharest, but published nonetheless) and they teach and they crowd their churches. Their presence, including their intellectual and spiritual presence, has not been eradicated. In the midst of this wretched Communist state the houses in the Magyar towns are restored and repainted; small municipal museums grow out of near-nothing, tended and arranged with infinite care.

When the long Transylvanian autumn and winter set in, a kind of decent 19th-century existence is palpably at hand, with stoves and larders, the Magyar teachers' houses with their books overflowing from room to room, and two big, healthy pigs scratching in the yard. It is a 19th-century existence because of the interior quality of this kind of life. Outside, Transylvania is dark. It is dangerous to drive after dusk, since the occasional ox carts and horse carts have no reflectors on their backboards; in the cities the streets are badly

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lit, because the electric current is poor and weak. The lights are pale, hardly flickering in the squares, reminiscent of a Central Europe sixty or more years ago. But in the sunny autumn mornings, the plane trees are drenched with gold and the cities are real cities, with people milling in the old streets, visibly propelled by the difficulties and by the purposefulness of everyday life. And thus certain things in these cities still breathe the life of decades ago, when Magyar (and sometimes Magyar-Jewish) geniuses took wings to fly to the greater world of Budapest and Paris. It was then, in the coffeehouses of Kolozsvár and Nagyvárad, the Baudelaireans and the folklorists argued and drank into the night, a Transylvanian night in which the coffeehouse smoke instantly wafted away in the clean dark air in the narrow streets, between the uneven rows of the yellow-stuccoed, one-story provincial houses with their earthy odors and sometimes erotic promises and the lone swaying electric tram car lighting up the cobblestones at the far end.

Yet though the cityscapes have changed in many ways, the landscape remains almost untouched. By September the grass is down, the large, unpeopled, and untended hills resemble the 19th-century deer park of a great Anglophile lord. There are lakes in the mountains, agate-pure, secretive, and calm in bowls of pine forests, without a single inn or a house or even a tourist tent nearby. And beyond the mountain ridges lie Moldavia and the snow, a different world of bearded priests and gypsies and Levantine merchants in their cordovan boots. Ancient roads and mountain passes, which were used by Transylvanian craftsmen to haul their boots and finished goods and furs to the markets, are still traversed now and then by bullock-carts, a truck passing them every five minutes or so. On the other side of Moldavia, a mere one hundred miles further to the east, almost all of the roads peter out, disappearing before the Russian frontier where the few crossing-points are hundreds of miles apart. It is as if Russia were thousands of miles away; as if the Russians had never been there.

SO THIS is the beautiful and the bitter end of Europe, poor beyond its deserts, rich with its past, and where the past is present not only in the remaining houses with their high-ceilinged rooms and tile stoves, but in the minds and the hearts of the people. In George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston Smith, on one occasion, secretly and daringly offered a toast "to the past." In darkest Transylvania, as 1984 approaches, such a toast would be as out of place as a toast to Dracula. There the past is real. It illuminates the everyday necessities of life; it is the living hope not only of the oppressed Magyars but of those younger Rumanian writers and thinkers who, perhaps for the first time since the Turks, have something in common with the Magyars. They, too, despise the police state, the mechanical surveillance, and the senseless acres of chemical factories in the valleys of Transylvania, spewing sulphurous yellow and scarlet fumes into the air. The Russian flood is retreating, one day the Communist state will be gone, and when that miasmatic fog had lifted perhaps the multifarious people in the streets and squares of Transylvania will not be condemned to repeat the past, precisely because they, unlike the Russians, have learned to know it. There will be no place for petty Draculas in Transylvania. They will take their vampirish flight to Hollywood, to those Californian castles where they belong.

The model totalitarian state.

NEO-STALINIST ALBANIA

BY JOHN LIEBER

"THE IMPERIALIST and revisionist superpowers are plotting to achieve their goal of world domination," an Australian-accented voice intones over the short-wave radio. "The peoples of the world must unite to resist them and defeat their aims. Hail Marxism-Leninism!" The communiqué concludes with a tuneless recording of the "Internationale." It's business as usual on Radio Tirana's regular Saturday evening program, live from the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. For more than thirty years, little Albania (it's about the size of Maryland) has been a running gag among diplomats and foreign policy experts, a caricature of the moral and economic collapse of the Communist system. This is not just ideological backbiting: the leaders who cling to the notion that they are the only "true heirs" of Marx and Lenin have made Albania the most regimented and xenophobic society on the continent. But in the aftermath of the bizarre December 18 death of Albania's Prime Minister and second-in-command, Mehmet Shehu, Western attention has been drawn to this perplexing country.

If Shehu's "suicide" was in fact a political murder, as seems likely, then there can be no doubt about who gave the order. Enver Hoxha, the 73-year-old secretary of the Albanian Workers' Party, orders purges like other people order out for pizza—that is, whenever the urge hits him. Hoxha, who has the dubious distinction of being the lone disciple of Joseph Stalin still in power, has faithfully molded Albania into a model totalitarian state. Since Communist-dominated resistance forces ousted the Nazis in 1944, Albania has strictly adhered to the Stalinist method of economic development, emphasizing centralized planning, expropriation, and forcible collectivization. (With the exception of a decreasing number of tiny family plots,

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all private enterprise is forbidden.) According to a 1978 State Department report, Albania has more security police per capita than any other country in Europe. Pop music, long hair, birth control, Western fashions, pornography, and modern art are all banned. The official press often exhorts citizens to identify those who persist in such "alien manifestations" so that they may be punished without any lingering "petit bourgeois sentimentality." One 1975 law requires those Albanians with surnames deemed "dishonorable" or first names deemed "unsuitable for political, ideological, and moral reasons" (generally those of foreign origin or religious implication) to change them. In 1967 Hoxha formally abolished religion and declared Albania the world's first atheist state. (One of the highlights of the government-supervised tours of the country is a visit to the atheist museum, where exhibits document the "crimes" of the "reactionary" clergy.) All but a few of the country's churches and mosques have been destroyed, and the remainder have been converted for "more scientific" use as barns, sports arenas, and meeting halls. More ominously, several church leaders accused of conducting ceremonies on the sly, including three Roman Catholic titular bishops, have disappeared over the past few years.

Hoxha's foreign policy has been even less circumscribed by the dictates of reason. Not surprisingly, the regime is virulently hostile to the United States, Israel, and South Africa. But Albania, perversely, also delights in biting the hand that feeds it. Hoxha has repeatedly put an end to economically rewarding relationships with leading Communist powers. He broke ties with Yugoslavia in 1948, with the Soviet Union in 1961, and with China in 1978. Admittedly, Albania's deep-seated suspicion of all outsiders has some basis in history. For five centuries the Albanians languished under Turkish rule, and before that under the Byzantine and Roman empires. But Hoxha's diplomatic malaise results primarily from this intransigence on matters of doctrine, and he now finds himself fresh out of patrons.

THE 1978 RIFT with Peking, which has been building for some time, was provoked by Hoxha's repeated denunciations of the "degenerative trends" that had led the Chinese to liberalize their economy and to improve relations with the United States. The cut-off of Chinese aid has had dire consequences for the Albanian economy. During the 17-year *entente cordiale* between the two countries, China provided an estimated $5 billion in economic and military assistance, as well as a vague assurance that Albania would be protected from foreign aggression. From 1966 to 1970, at the height of the one-sided alliance between the two countries, Albania enjoyed an economic boom. Expansion in both agriculture and industry outstripped the goals set by the regime. But since 1976, when China began to reduce its aid, growth rates have plummeted. According to Hoover Institution figures, the virtually autarchic economy has expanded only two-thirds as rapidly as targeted in the past five years; the agricultural sector fell halfway short of its target. In spite of the forcible industrialization of the country since World War II, per capita gross national product lags far behind most of Eastern Europe; according to the World Bank, it has now stagnated at about $850. The country's economic woes are compounded by a constitutional provision against accepting aid or credits from "bourgeois and revisionist monopolies and states." This means that when the government condescends to go shopping for desperately needed imports, it insists on "full compensation": the foreign seller is required to buy Albanian goods of similar value, in the manner of an international barter system. But the goods Albania offers for export—mainly chrome, oil, and minerals—are of notoriously low quality, and Western businessmen haven't exactly jumped at Albania's offers of trade. In the 1960s and early 1970s China accounted for half of Albania's trade. Now, unable to fill the gap created by the flight of Chinese capital and expertise, the Albanians have abandoned or delayed a number of the huge industrial projects inaugurated with the help of their erstwhile allies.

HOXHA, of course, denies that anything is amiss in Albania, which he describes as "the most truly democratic country in the world." At the Eighth Congress of the AWP in November 1981, he said, "In this grave period of crises which has engulfed the capitalist and revisionist world . . . in our country there is complete economic and political stability, our society is sound, our people are confident about the future." After blaming the slow growth of the economy on "the imperialist-revisionist blockade" of the country, he hastened to add that Albania is not at all isolated in the world: "Our country is honored and respected by the progressive and peace-loving peoples and states everywhere. . . . Its international position is strong." (This fantasy was belied by the fact that only one of the right-thinking, "progressive" nations, Vietnam, was represented at the congress.) And, in addition to Hoxha's standard denunciations of the "imperialist" United States, the "social-imperialist" Soviet Union, and "revisionist" China, he found another way to jeopardize the country's precarious economic position. In 1980 Albania signed a $720-million trade pact with Yugoslavia, which was to provide the country with essential technology and manufactured goods. But Hoxha, never one to shy away from a fight, devoted more than an hour of his speech to criticism of Yugoslavia's treatment of the ethnic Albanians who inhabit Kosovo, a territory long disputed by the two countries. Although the agreement has not been canceled, relations between the Balkan neighbors, longtime rivals, have since reached a new low. Sources in the Yugoslav

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diplomatic corps confirm that contacts between the two countries are likely to suffer if Hoxha persists in "interfering in Yugoslav internal affairs by conjuring up irredentist dreams . . . of Greater Albania."

Though the aging dictator's grip on the country gives no sign of loosening, there has been renewed speculation in Western capitals that Albania may be destined to rejoin the Soviet fold. Since 1956, when Khrushchev made his famous report to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, in which he criticized Stalin's murderous excesses, Hoxha has carried on a one-man campaign to defend the late Soviet dictator from "lies and accusations . . . fabricated by bourgeois and revisionist critics of various hues." The Albanian old guard has not forgiven subsequent Soviet leaders for Khrushchev's blasphemy, and is unlikely to give up its ideological war against "the present Kremlin czar, the arch-revisionist Brezhnev" for any reason.

Nevertheless, Western analysts are concerned about a possible shift from this policy after Hoxha's death, particularly now, after the demise of Shehu, the expected successor. It seems more than coincidental that Shehu's reported suicide came during the preparation of the economic program for presentation to the rubber-stamp parliament. As the Yugoslav and Italian press have suggested, the timing of his death, and the scant coverage it received in the Albanian press, seem to indicate that Shehu had the misfortune of incurring Hoxha's wrath on substantial policy issues. Sources familiar with Albanian court intrigues believe that Shehu, who supervised the day-to-day implementation of economic policy, favored modifying the economic isolation that has been Albania's lot since the 1978 break with China. But even if there is any truth to such speculation, it is impossible to know whether Shehu imagined an opening to the West or to the Warsaw Pact states.

IN ANY CASE, there is some evidence that certain factions within the Albanian Workers' Party would welcome the opportunity for reconciliation with Moscow. In 1974 Hoxha purged a group of high-level officials, gathered around his longtime Defense Minister, Bequr Belluku, who apparently favored seeking an arrangement with the Soviets and their Eastern European allies. Although Hoxha proudly announced at the 1976 Party Congress that he had dispatched that group to the "garbage dump where all traitors of revolution belong," the economic and military considerations pointing toward an eventual rapprochement with Moscow cannot be dismissed so easily.

The late Defense Minister and his cohorts, who were generally pro-Chinese, seem to have been motivated less by admiration for the Soviet system than by knowledge of Albania's military weakness. Notwithstanding government claims that the entire population can be mobilized in 48 hours, Albanian defenses are in a pitiful state, owing in large part to the lack of spare parts needed to keep their aging Soviet and Chinese equipment functioning. One indication of the leadership's concern about the country's military vulnerability is that, at considerable expense, the Albanian countryside has been covered with thousands of mushroom-shaped concrete pillboxes, presumably designed to impede the progress of Soviet tanks.

Although the Soviets have limited themselves so far to peaceful, if persistent, efforts to woo Albania back, the regime's concern is not unfounded. The Kremlin has long hankered after a naval base on Albania's Adriatic coast. Khrushchev is said to have raised the issue repeatedly before the falling out between the two countries. Only 45 miles from the Italian coast, such a facility would allow the Soviets to control the Adriatic, and to increase dramatically their presence in the northern Mediterranean. Moscow has made it clear that it regards Spain's imminent induction into NATO as an effort to upset the balance of power in the Mediterranean, and that it will seek some improvement of its strategic position in the area to offset the advantage NATO would gain from the use of Spanish ports. Proximity to Yugoslavia, the problem child of the Balkans, and to Greece, where American influence appears to be on the wane, makes Albania an attractive candidate for this role.

THE SITUATION in Albania presents something of a quandary to Western policymakers. Albania's traditional suspicion of modern Western culture is not likely to be reversed, nor is there any legitimate non-Communist opposition to the regime. The first and only Albanian monarch, King Zog I, is memorable only for the extravagant life he led in exile, which was financed by the plunder he took with him when Mussolini's armies invaded in 1939. His son Leka, the pretender to the throne, is an international gunrunner who has spent only two days of his life in the land he claims as his kingdom. Because Albania has so little contact with the West, it is difficult to gauge the strength of anti-Soviet feeling in the country. As Professor Nicholas Pano of Western Illinois University, one of the few American experts on Albania, points out, nationalism remains the essential force in Albanian politics, and throughout modern history the threat to Albanian sovereignty has come from the East, not the West. It may be that Albanian nationalism rules out a resumption of friendly relations with Moscow. But one thing is certain: if the second generation of Albanian Communists rejects the present leadership's totalitarian nationalism and pursues a secure and profitable relationship with the Eastern bloc, the West will be virtually powerless to do anything about it. It is ironic that Hoxha's brand of paranoid Stalinism—which has brought misery to the Albanians—may prove in retrospect to have been the only kind of leadership compatible with U.S. foreign policy interests.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Mixed Feelings

What are these things called love? Down through several ages, this question has been occupying people almost as much as the feeling(s) that the question is about, and it presses harder all the time. Everything that once shaped and insured the idea of love in Western civilization has been shaken: what is its nature now? That was the unifying inquiry in Antonioni's great trilogy, *L'Avventura*, *La Notte*, and *Eclipse*, and in the 20 years since then, love has become even more empirical and mystifying.

Shoot the Moon
(Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)

Now Bo Goldman has tackled the subject. Goldman won an Oscar for his screenplay *Melvin and Howard*, which did not shake my view that it was a script with a beginning and an end separated by a tedium of stenographic naturalism. *Shoot the Moon* is much more interesting. Goldman is genuinely disturbed by the question above, has some sensitivity to altering atmospheres and reliances, and in good measure has explored them without attempting conclusions and, most admirably, without trying to cheer us up. Eventually he botches his script, but there's considerable in it to respect.

The title is, I gather, the name of a coup in the card game, hearts (!). The setting is the country north of San Francisco. In a large house with lots of grounds and a (photographically overused) pond, lives Albert Finney, a successful novelist. (So was the hero of *La Notte*.) He has been married for 15 years to Diane Keaton; they have four daughters, the oldest about 14. At the start we learn, fairly clumsily, that Finney is having an affair with Karen Allen, a divorcée with a young son. (Allen telephones him endearingly at his home, which is not believable; his oldest daughter listens in on an extension, which—we soon see—is superfluous.) He and Keaton go to a ceremony in San Francisco where his latest novel is given an "International Book Award," so we must assume that he wrote the best novel in the world that year. Keaton is aware of her husband's affair and holds herself together until after the ceremony; then, at home, they fight. Next morning he leaves, with the bag she has already packed for him.

The rest of the film moves among five people: Finney and Keaton; their oldest daughter, Dana Hill; the other woman, Allen; and the young construction man who becomes Keaton's lover, Peter Weller. He arrives to start work on a tennis court that she had ordered months before and had forgotten about; the moment he steps out of the truck, we know why he is in the picture. At various points in the story each of these people says/enacts matters relevant to the quandaries of the subject. Finney is not really out of love with Keaton; he is just *in* love with Allen and wants to be with her. Keaton, severely wounded, finds at first that she is nervous with another man and then—it's implied, not stated—is surprised to find out how easily he fills her life though she thought she was in love with Finney and in fact is still in love with him. (About halfway through the film, we feel that the word love should always be put in quotation marks, to signify that it's like an algebraic *x*, a symbol for an unknown quantity.) Allen tells Finney that she loves him *and* likes him, but also tells him frankly that if he doesn't "come through," she'll find someone else. Weller never uses the term love; nevertheless he clearly finds himself with more feeling for Keaton than he had expected. The young Hill is tormented by her love of her father and her feeling of his betrayal of her mother and their family; and she is frightened by the fact that he can have sex with another woman, frightened—again this is implied—by the likelihood that her own love/sex future is going to be filled with more questions and ambiguities than she had imagined. This insight into the young adolescent's anguish is the subtlest work in the film. (Parents of such adolescents will be better judges than I of the credibility of the sexual frankness between adults and children throughout.)

Isolated moments for all five, isolated strands running throughout, give the script some authentic address of complicated unsureness, all the more complicated because of the increasing dimness of compass points in the world wherein one loves. (Or "loves.") It's this authenticity that, almost from the start, lifts the picture out of the triangle-become-rectangle formula, that frees it from the need to have novelty of plot. It has none, quite deliberately; it sets out to tell some truth about what has long been a trite fiction, and some truth it does indeed reach.

But then come the movie touches, the production touches, the audience zingers, the blatant answers to the financiers' worry about the picture's pulling power. First, the use of the children. They are needed as common complications in such dilemmas, and Goldman sees them as charmers, which they are, and also as terribly wearing nuisances, which they also are. But recurrently in the film there's a sense that, when he's

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Chariots of Fire. Well written, well directed, exquisitely acted social drama based on the true story of two British Olympic runners, 1924.

My Dinner With André. Seemingly impromptu table-talk of Wallace Shawn, the playwright, and André Gregory, the director, becomes an interesting inquiry into contemporary chances for fulfillment.

Reds. The story of John Reed and Louise Bryant. So stirring, so committed, that its patent flaws are forgivable. Diane Keaton surpasses expectation; Beatty, co-star, co-author, director, and producer, deserves cheers.

Time Bandits. Product of two Monty Python people, a romp through time and space with a child and six dwarfs. Children adore it; so do I and some other adults.

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in need of emotional relief or contextual glue, he brings on the kids. (This is more true of the younger three than the oldest.) And he uses the children as character-builders for the adults. If Finney can carry Allen's little boy to the bathroom in the middle of the night and rub his back while he throws up, the man can't be all bad, can he?

For more egregious character-building, there is the death of Keaton's father, dragged in seemingly just so that Finney can go to the hospital and hug the dying man, begging him not to leave. What's even worse than the scene's awkward insertion is its superfluity: we were convinced beforehand that Finney is a relatively decent man, as nonmalevolent as most people are, that he's in an emotional quandary, not a pit of selfish sin. So the deathbed scene is doubly bothersome.

AND THEN there are the fights—pure movie hooey, the big ones, anyway, put in because somebody felt there had to be "filmic" moments. They don't grow out of character and tension, and they can't be accommodated to the tenor of the picture. They are paste-ons. Finney literally breaks into the house one night, after Keaton has locked him out, to give a birthday present to Hill, who doesn't want to see him; and the resultant fracas, unlike anything we are used to in this family, should make future relations difficult. But it doesn't. Later, after her father's funeral, Keaton and Finney accidentally lunch in the same restaurant. He joins her, and they have an argument at the tops of their voices, in vulgar language, embarrassing waiters and other customers, a scene that is sheer nonsense for the two people we know; it's just an old movie-comedy scene, updated. And there is a final sequence which I won't describe except to say that it may have been suggested by Robert Shaw's final scene in *The Hireling*. In the latter, it was logical, tight, terrible. Here it's sheer movie nonsense, a riot of destruction that would in reality have injured or killed a dozen people. Only believability gets hurt. The picture leaves us, despite its moments of truth, with that truth almost wiped out.

Alan Parker, the director, last made *Fame*, which dealt with high school students bent on show biz. Here his best work is with the children, all younger than in *Fame*. From the little ones, he gets complete involvement and response. From Dana Hill, the oldest, he gets a moodily touching performance, real acting—that is, visual and audible conviction of truths unseen and unheard.

But Parker leans much too heavily on misty shots of the countryside (Michael Seresin was the cinematographer) to provide ironic harmony for the jarring goings-on between the people who live there. And he has either encouraged or permitted Diane Keaton to return to her Woody-Allen-film performance.

I'm not sure "return" is correct: I'm assuming that this film was made after *Reds*. In Beatty's film, which I've recently seen again, Keaton rises to a role that is, roughly speaking, in the classic tradition: it's played *outward*, it's expressed, not implied; it has an almost visible outline that she has to step into and sustain, and she does it excellently, growing as she goes. In *Shoot the Moon*, she is once again in a largely internalized role, with lots of silences, and instead of approaching this woman with equivalent, though different, seriousness, Keaton falls back on her old crazy-mixed-up-kid routine: the broken sentences, the broken gestures, the sudden and suddenly withdrawn little smiles, the whole teensy-weensy cabaret act. Possibly as part of her act, as part of the image she wants to create of the unaffected, nerve-center young woman, she wears shapeless blouses and baggy pants most of the time, announcing ostentatiously, "The hell with this movie star crap." It seems affected that Keaton never once in this film wears a pair of jeans that fits her.

Is Keaton going to sentence herself to an image as restricted as, say, Woody Allen's? *Reds* showed that she can do much, much more, that she could have played this quite different role with less phony throwaway mimetics, more imagination. (Another nuisance. Her husband's name is George. Throughout she calls him "Chorch.") I hope that Keaton will get and take opportunities to expand. Otherwise, before long, when we see her name, we'll know what we're going to see just the way you can taste the food in certain restaurants when you see the menu.

Finney, who has been somnabulizing

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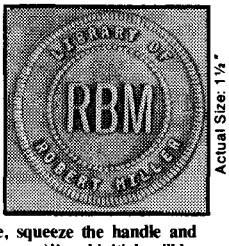

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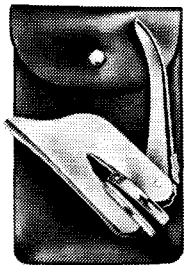

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through his latest American films, *Wolfen* and *Looker*, really works here, and makes us see why he once promised to be a great actor. That promise will never be kept; for one thing, he has let his face and body—his instrument—lose the electric tensions that once they had. But he still has power and tenderness when he chooses to use them, and he chooses to, here.

The music under the credits is one finger picking out the song "Don't Blame Me" on a piano. (It's later sung in the "quarrel" restaurant by a singer so ludicrously bad that she would never have been hired for that place.) It's an apt method, an apt number. The method is tentative. And the song hints that blame is a problematic impulse in love and marriage troubles these days. I wish there were less in the picture itself to blame.

A hero of the academy.

The Mind Of Perry Miller

By Ann Douglas

Reading the newly published *Portraits of Great Teachers* edited by Joseph Epstein (Basic Books), I wondered where among these great teachers was Perry Miller, the fabulous Perry Miller, the Harvard intellectual historian who presented to generations of students in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s the very type, in Edmund Morgan's words, of "Man Thinking," perhaps the only one many of his pupils would ever see? Perry Miller had "elected," a term he loved, the early 1960s as the final period of his brilliant, tormented life. As an undergraduate, I witnessed the apotheosis of his myth, the suicide of a vastly erudite complex genius, the last act of a histrionic career devoted to books and booze. The Miller legend involved no affair of public relations, although I doubt he minded the attention and awe he received. It was rather a willed and strenuous autobiographical effort to engage, without counting the cost, in the romance of the mind, the hybris of striving for perfect intellectual command.

Miller's opening lecture in Harvard's standard survey of American literature was the first college class I ever attended. A massive middle-aged man with heavy jowls and small dead-light eyes, Miller appeared to have savaged life and been savaged by it; he had not been softened, nor effaced, nor even perhaps enriched. He was the first Angry Older Man I had ever seen. He began the class abruptly by reading aloud from William Bradford's description of Cape Cod in *Of Plymouth Plantation*: we heard how the Cape appeared to its earliest settlers. His auditors were plunged *in medias res*. Ponderously and unforgettably, though with no explication, Miller rested on Bradford's homely eloquent phrase: "All things stand upon them with a weather-beatened face." This line, he implied, *mattered* to Americans in ways that reverberated and ramified endlessly, and he issued to the class a summons to its significance.

Miller immediately assumed for me a narrative presence, almost biblical in its density, rather than a critical one. So total was his apprehension of his material that he appeared to have been there at its inscription, if he were not the inscriber himself. He told us, not merely about Plymouth Plantation, but about life as he understood it: an inexorable, possibly meaningless, lonely, exciting, ultimately historical business, offering occasions for irony, wit, degradation, and the dignity that comes from facing, if not resolving, its complexities. Miller introduced his class to books as to ultimate reality, and to a pantheon of minds, of which his own was not the least significant, and of which the student was invited, even taunted, to become a member.

Miller was, to use the Puritan terms he recirculated and illuminated, an "antinomian" not an "Arminian." Good works were necessary, but they were not an index of success, much less of salvation. Active faith in the enterprise of knowledge for the modern student, as in the inscrutable workings of a majestically cruel divinity for the 17th-century Calvinist, was a matter of labor, yes, but still more of grace: a hard-working student, Miller told us in that first lecture, might get an A in his course; but so might a loafer. Miller's greatness as a teacher lay in the massive challenge he had come to incarnate: go and do likewise, he dared his students. Read and think and write as if that were the burning business of life—if you dare.

Miller's colleague Alan Heimert once remarked that no one had ever seen America the first time. Every voyager or colonist arrives programmed by tracts, myths, religious expectations, economic hopes, cameras; they see a preconceived place, not the one that meets their eyes. American writers have hungered for that unseen primal view: Walt Whitman, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Hart Crane, Jack Kerouac, Thomas Pynchon, Norman Mailer, and others have created versions of that first-seen American magical kingdom. Miller too had such visionary impulses; for him scholarship was a heroic enterprise because it was as inexhaustible and definite an adventure as, to use another word he cherished, "discovery."

THREE YEARS after my first course with him, I watched a drunken Miller read *Moby Dick* to a gathering at the literary Signet Club. He was late. Those who had arranged the occasion worried that he might not arrive, that he might show up hopelessly drunk. At last Miller came. He began to read Melville's last great chase sequence. He slurred and stumbled; then his genius for reinhabiting the genesis of great creativity surfaced. The intoxicated text transformed Miller's inebriation into a strange sobriety of inspiration. He read with increasing force and clarity, delving deeper into the text and his audience. When he finished, we knew two masters had met to vivify each other.

In the spring semester of 1962, during Miller's graduate course on American Romanticism, he talked, hung over and ill, to a tape recorder and to an awed class of the many matters that made the

Ann Douglas is a professor of English at Columbia University. She is the author of *The Feminization of American Culture* (Knopf) and is currently completing two studies of modern culture: *Clytemnestra Kills Again: A Child Is Being Murdered*, and *Terrible Honesty—Secular Culture in New York City 1919-1935.*

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classroom for him an arena rather than a refuge or a pulpit. He spoke of his differences with his older Harvard colleague, F. O. Matthiessen, author of *The American Renaissance*, and, like Miller, a suicide. Matthiessen was a left political thinker of sorts; Miller was not political. This was not the crux of their debate, as Miller saw it in 1962. Matthiessen believed that American materials were best studied in their own terms; Miller placed them always in a larger European context. The special nature of American uniqueness was at issue. Miller said that he and Matthiessen had waged their debate over the American identity until it killed his friend.

As adverse to strict Marxism as he was to McCarthyism, Miller, whether reading Melville or talking of Matthiessen, was asserting his conviction that ideas and books are primary, uncheckable, even "dangerous" forces; men live and die by them. Someone, Miller asserted, might actually jump out of a window because he could neither accept nor deny an idea whose importance he felt crucial. That he might be in other ways a damaged individual need not be at issue. This was my first glimpse of utopia, or, perhaps I should say, of what Plato, and Miller, meant when they spoke of "the Republic." To Miller, ideas were only trivial when, as they usually are, they are incomplete, borrowed, unthought, and books are only unimportant to those who cannot read.

In the fall of 1963, Miller gave the course on Romanticism again but did not live to complete it. Two-thirds of the way through the semester, he suffered what appeared to be a small stroke in class. The students present, legend goes, at once knew the difference between this awful pause in the sometimes fumbling but always illuminating speech of their teacher and the usual drunken or hung-over halts in his brilliant monologues. Miller, conveying his insistence by a half-paralyzed gesture, would not let any pupil go out for the urgently needed aid until he had marshaled his faculties sufficiently into their "prodigious" (another word Miller loved) formation so that he could complete his thought. The students magically understood: they must wait, he must speak. The ritual of articulation had become critical. Miller did it, closed his period, dismissed the class, and left on record his finest tribute to intellectual integrity, his most compelling definition of thought. Whatever the difficulty, however strong the opposition, internal or external: finish the sentence.

A few days after Miller's stroke, a concerned student asked him what his doctor's diagnosis had been: "If I don't stop drinking," Miller responded (I paraphrase), "I will be dead in a week." Drinking was for Miller, as he believed it had been for Sinclair Lewis, an author he had known and admired, "defiance." In an essay on Lewis, Miller describes meeting the writer in 1949 during Lewis's last year. Miller imperturbably (he loved such flagrant reversals of current opinion), in full face of the apparently opposing facts, labeled his friend "the incorruptible Sinclair Lewis." At the time of their meeting, Lewis was written out, compulsively drinking and talking as he restlessly traversed the European continent. Miller became an observer of that terrible spectacle, "the death of a lion." At the end of Lewis's life, Miller wrote about his friend, and prophetically about himself: "his back to the wall, facing himself drunk or sober, he did not flinch."

PHOTOGRAPH OF PERRY MILLER COURTESY OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Miller implied that Lewis was "incorruptible" despite his parodic self-degradations, his stream of bad books, broken marriages and friendships, despite his maniacal demands for attention, his grotesque and damaged face: "The point being that one thing really counted, his work." Lewis had done little major writing since the early novels of the 1920s, *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, *Elmer Gantry*, *Dodsworth*—novels which were "a very great part" of Miller's experience—but he could only fail to equal or surpass his earlier achievement. In every sense a wreck, Lewis was, Miller asserted, curiously beyond failure: "he had performed so thoroughly [his 'act of dedication'] that he would never, whether flamboyant or, as now, sick and battered, do anything but exemplify it." Lewis's achievement, and Miller's, while it hardly sufficed to fulfill their needs, fixed their identities. One could outlive such tangible effort—Miller, unlike Lewis, made sure that he did not—but one could not undo it. On December 9, 1963, Miller died. Several empty quart bottles of liquor were reportedly found by the side of his corpse, a carcass that by rights

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should have been as scarred as Ahab's or the body of the white whale itself.

I do not mean to romanticize the uncanny power by which Miller shaped his death after Lewis's or perhaps described Lewis's demise in the light of what he knew his own must be. Like many of his contemporaries, Miller was alcoholic, self-destructive, and reified his own compulsions toward abuse. Would that he had lived another 20 years to teach the audiences whose unworthiness delighted him. We need his sheer commitment to thought as surely as we need the different ideals embodied in the Kennedys, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King. Yet, despite Miller's shattering self-violence, I rejoice in his transmutation of the accidental ordinariness we call life into something believed and willed; his invigorating belief, evident in every part of his life and legend, that the intellectual mission was heroic; his clear decision that, if the special adrenalin needed for that mission was lessening in intensity or uncontrollably fueling other far less worthy enterprises, he preferred death to life without its high imperative. For Miller, to think was to defy convention and fate, and to take the consequences. His conception of those consequences was monumental and flawed; his career was inspirational and tragic. Miller was the academy's Othello, its Hamlet, its Lear.

THAT IS THE MYTH. I cannot vouch for its accuracy: I did not know the man. I know only his work. Miller's scholarly achievement, his histrionic excavation of American theology, was massive. In such brilliant books as *The New England Mind* (1939 and 1953), *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956), *Jonathan Edwards* (1949), *Nature's Nation* (1966), his dazzling introductions to Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and many others, his superb anthologies of Puritan and transcendentalist writings, *The American Puritans* (1956) and *The American Transcendentalists* (1957), he insisted that in Calvinist theology lay America's only intellectual heritage. Miller's reputation is more secure, if more controversial, than that of any other student of American culture since World War II. Yet Miller's posthumously published *The Responsibility of Mind in a Civilization of Machines* (University of Massachusetts Press, $14.50) which brings together addresses and essays, with few exceptions, never before published, the final testament of a man determined to keep his mind unfettered or to forge its fetters himself, has largely passed unnoticed in our major intellectual quarterlies and weeklies in the two years since its publication.

IN A SUPERB essay on Miller published in the *Harvard Review* shortly after Miller's death, Edmund Morgan, a student of Miller's, wrote that many of the historians who attended Miller's funeral were secretly glad at the demise of a figure whose tortured but total commitment shamed them. *The Responsibility of Mind in a Civilization of Machines* contains a number of essays written between 1940 and 1961. In them, Miller speaks directly and often, as he seldom did, of his culture, particularly of the contemporary plight of American higher education; his genius for diatribe was never more brilliant. The situation he describes, the cutback of intellectual "discovery," as Miller called it, entailed by the cold war, bears a strong resemblance to our present state of diminished intellectual energy and resources. Has the book's startling relevance, backed by Miller's prestige and the "prodigious" quality of his astute commentary in our society, made it unappealing? Has Miller's avowal that the task of fighting cultural downslide lies squarely on the shoulders of teachers and intellectuals caused the book's critical neglect?

Miller the scholar was always Miller a quondam actor whose links to American oratory, melodrama, and vaudeville were strong. H. L. Mencken, the jester of the jeremiad tradition Miller explicated, was clearly one of his mentors, and Miller professed a deep fondness and respect for "clowns." Miller wrote rhetorically, and he enjoyed his ponderous flirtations with the ludicrous; some of his prose is bombast suited to the late Victorian troupe of the Shakespearean Julia Marlowe with whom he played briefly in his youth. But rhetoric is not only, as Yeats said, the will doing the work of the imagination; it can also be the will doing its own work, and doing it well, the work of moral idealism and pragmatic effort. Rhetoric practiced in good faith is sloth's antithesis, and sloth was the vice Miller wanted most to avoid, perhaps the only vice he did avoid.

Today's openly applauded idea of "being good to oneself," and the secret misgivings and sinkings into hopelessness such "self-esteem" often masks, suggest a static situation maintained and exploited by chains of corporate powers intent on stabilizing every conceivable kind of market. Sloth is only a sin when patterns of motivation and duty, whether imposed by "God" or a cultural situation, dominate; when men and women believe they must seek goals far larger, far more arduously attained, than that of self-consciousness or comfort: what Miller in *The Responsibility of Mind* terms "the service of something that all along has been and will be greater than ourselves."

Miller, master of irony, fed on the despair that can exist only in the awareness of barely discernible hope and that must result in virtually endless toil. He piled denunciation upon denunciation, he even apparently gave impetus to sloth ("why bother if it's nearly hopeless?"), only to make more difficult but more necessary the activity of self-awareness and whatever social action that entails, whether the rigorous intellectual investigations of a Jonathan Edwards or the crucial, if sporadic, protests of a Henry Thoreau.

MILLER SPECULATED that he did not receive the acclaim he deserved because many of his readers remained in the clutch of "that stubborn, persistent, indomitable optimism that inspired the gigantic growth and prosperity of this country." For Miller, as for the New England divines, in his words, "the doctrine of predestination did not have as a psychological consequence the surrender of all volition, but rather . . . was a powerful stimulus to activity." In other words, although one's effort guaranteed no outcome, it should be immense. Harsh theological tenets have the density of intractable, but not immovable, matter; negative evidence about the state of American society, in Miller's view, is simply additional weight that the intellectual must press.

The drama that fascinated the American intellectuals of the 1920s, among whom Miller grew up, involved a hero, preferably an artist, usually an alcoholic, a rebel able to articulate, and to achieve within limits, yet doomed by the sluggish conformity of his culture to acts of futile protest and to a corrosively negative narcissism. This figure, as much myth as fact, represented an amalgam of turn-of-the-century progressive activism and post-World War I nihilism. He was a creature paradoxically en-

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dowed with the energies of the Midwest, yet suffering from the flagging motivation of educated New England. Ring Lardner, Sherwood Anderson, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Hart Crane, all formed and fitted the mold; so did Miller.

Born in Chicago in 1905, but a resident for most of his adult life of New England, Miller long struggled with the tenets of John Dewey, apostle of progressivism, and one of the great formative figures of Miller's *alma mater*, the University of Chicago. Yet Miller as a young man also followed the lead of the post-progressive critic Van Wyck Brooks when Brooks's was perhaps the most influential modern, elegant, and acerbic mind to be found in Boston circles. Miller sweepingly proclaimed the intellectual sovereignty of the 1920s and its concerns. All academic history since the 1920s, he explains in these essays, was a conscientious effort "to systematize and regularize the impact of the jazz age." And the "jazz age" enacted, in Miller's view, just that cultural clash he himself represented. In "Nineteenth Century New England," an essay included in *The Responsibility of Mind*, Miller ascribes the intellectual birth of the "jazz age" to Sinclair Lewis, Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, Vernon Parrington, and other Midwestern writers who refused to transform the crude Midwestern scene, as their forebears had done, into refined New England imagery and words. And Miller was to honor and further their rebellion.

Miller is the only major critic of his generation who, strangely, given his love of the literate, devoted scant space to Henry James, the master of overarticulation, the culminator of the New England genteel tradition, and the progenitor of self-conscious formal literary modernism. Miller always believed that the authors Europeans responded to as most "American" were indeed so, and, as such, of supreme importance. In "Europe's Faith in America's Fiction," an essay describing his year as a visiting professor in Holland in 1949, which appears in *The Responsibility of Mind*, Miller delightedly records a well-attended celebration honoring the centennial of Poe's death in a town of 80,000 in Frisia. He noted that Europeans read the "tough" writers—Lewis, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Caldwell, Farrell, Cain, Henry Miller, not Glasgow, Wharton, Cather, or James. He agreed with his European audiences that Americans' special material consisted of "powerful uneducated persons"—Ahab, Gatsby, Studs, Jennie Gerhardt. Few New Englanders here.

Even Miller's excavation of the 17th-century "New England Mind," the title of his major work, was as much a massive attack on its later self-interpretation and self-righteousness as an exposition of its once dense and formative role in American culture. New England at its inception, Miller loved to tell unwary audiences, was not "liberal"; its laws hardly anticipated the Constitution. It was not genteel, it was far from Unitarian, and it was certainly not tolerant. In addresses collected here, speaking before polite groups celebrating the philanthropy of Phillips Brooks or the 1648 Cambridge Platform, Miller wickedly cut his hearers adrift from the heritage they thought they were commemorating.

Miller was no Marxist, no "fellow-traveler"; he expressed deplorably little interest in class issues or the political process. His elitist views, his emphasis on the primacy of articulation and consciousness, were too strong. Yet the Puritans he presented were not conservatives, nor even liberals; they were scholars and "radicals." They have as much in common with Miller's Chicago as with his Cambridge. Miller valued their raw courage easily as much as their intellect; probably he saw the two as one.

The Puritan settlers embarked to America, Miller explains in several of the essays gathered here, trusting, as revolutionary groups will, that the "middle" group of radical Puritans they had left behind (the Mensheviks, so to speak, to their Bolsheviks) would take over in England and that they would then assume control of the left and embody the revolution of the saints. Instead, Miller noted with a certain sardonic delight, Cromwell, no Menshevik, came to command and the Puritans were left with what Miller called elsewhere the "Errand into the Wilderness": the impossible demand of a stern God that their spiritual state not slide with their political-religious expectations into moderation or mediocrity. The ascendant "New England" of the

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19th and 20th centuries was a symbol of their partial failure, Miller asserted frankly; its influential, smug, sterile misreading of its past a sign of politic cowardice. The Puritans' real heirs went west to Ohio and beyond with the Transcendentalists in the 1840s and 1850s, where, a century later, Perry Miller would reincarnate their spirit and storm their old Northeastern citadel now occupied by sons they would have disowned.

MILLER, DESPITE his awareness of the long-lived implications of the cold war, his skepticism about the aid of foundations to universities (he found John Cotton's maxim—"tether a beast at night and by morning he will know the length of his tether"—appropriate here), his distrust of scholars working in "teams," could not foresee that American "ebullience," another word he favored, might soon slacken, that America might become "exhausted," as he then found Europe to be; that it would not, if only out of sheer abundance, always automatically spawn left- as well as right-wing thought. He could not predict during the college boom in which his career was enacted the present fall-off of students, the apathy of most Americans to the fate of higher education, the drop in federal and foundation support, nor did he pay sufficient heed to the ever-more-visible crucial role of the university as business investor, landlord, and toady to the state.

Yet Miller did not expect the cultural situation to improve: he obviously found the idea of progress a liberal decoy. He could imagine the end of America, if not of American affluence. In his essays he raises the possibility that American imperial hegemony might be as short-lived as Parthia's, that America was no Rome, but a magnificent catastrophe destined to accumulate debris until it ground to a dead halt in the 1980s.

Perry Miller knew, as others observed, that America was a gigantic experiment. The United States, to use the name congenial to Dos Passos and not to Miller, represented a staggeringly vast and rapid exploitation of natural resources by a labor force lured by not altogether insincere promises of a democratic life, an exploitation carried out solely for the interest of a single economic system, capitalism. That experiment in its major phase is, I think, over. "Modernism" may well have been, as Gertrude Stein believed, a matter of cultural acceleration, or, as W. W. Rostow more recently called it, the uncheckable "take-off" of a modernizing economy. Questions now arise. What will the slow-down or disintegration we face be like? What can scholars and teachers, late students of the dynamics of velocity, novitiates in the possibilities of diminished material hopes, do?

There is little doubt in my mind that Miller would have seen our current cultural crisis as underscoring the credo he imperfectly exemplified and fully explicated: insurrectionary service, the "invigoration," in Miller's phrase, "that comes from contending against society for the welfare of society." Is there really anything else, his last book demands, worth doing?

Miller's chosen form of contention was scholarship: a formidable unending study of American culture intended to salute its actual vigor and destroy its easy self-congratulations and misconceptions. Miller called himself a "creature of the academy," and, in doing so, he was not belittling himself. He told a class of Brown graduate students in an address included here, that their occupation (which many, he acerbically noted, would fail to perform) was that of "rising beyond the established, . . . into the unexplored space of the disturbing, . . . toward the engendering of dissimilarity."

Humanistic learning and teaching, Miller perceived, are not fall-back activities. They carry on the traditions of knowledge, in Carl Schorske's eloquent words, they "create the next life of the text." They are also safeguards of a wisely impassioned militancy. Any genuine book can be dangerous; any real thought revolutionary. In this, his last and perhaps most dangerous book, Perry Miller reminds us that it is always courageous truly to read and expound a text, that it is heroic to immerse oneself in the solitary struggle with many books. "The scholar can always close the door to his lonely chamber," Miller wrote in "The Scholar as Lone Wolf," "and nobody can lure him out if he elects to do so. . . . What has formerly been done, may, *mutatis mutandis*, still be done even in the age of TV." *Finish the sentence* he reminds us again—even the one Miller himself could not complete: a life-span of sobriety, precision, and endless effort to tap the resources of a dedicated imagination. Miller found he invariably electrified European audiences when he quoted Thomas Wolfe's magically haunting millenial words: "I believe that we are lost in America, but I believe that we shall be found."

THE PRODUCTIVITY PROBLEM

Minding America's Business
by Ira C. Magaziner and Robert C. Reich

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 350 pp., $25)

By common consent, the problems of the American economy extend well beyond the current recession. Whatever else people think these days, they seem to agree that the United States is in the midst of a basic productivity crisis and that government—as guardian of the national interest—must do something about it. Otherwise, the consensus is that American living standards will stagnate or decline, our international competitiveness will continue to diminish, and our world stature will shrink further.

Virtually every analysis of the economy's underlying difficulties starts from this perception of crisis. In my judgment, it is a seriously flawed analysis. First, it exaggerates considerably the nature of the "crisis" (economic "problem" would be more accurate). Second, it assumes that we can easily discover the source of America's diminished economic performance. And third, it further assumes that the government can do something to reverse matters. Neither of these assumptions is necessarily true.

This book shares these assumptions but, although they ultimately mar its

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conclusions, they do not diminish the informative nature of its analysis. Ira C. Magaziner, president of a private consulting firm, and Robert C. Reich, former head of the Federal Trade Commission's office of policy planning, have assembled an extraordinarily detailed account both of the problems of American business in worldwide competition and of the varieties of government policies—both here and abroad—intended to foster industrial growth and adjustment.

It is not light reading but, given their subject matter, it is lucid and often intriguing. For example, they point out that large national retail chains in the United States have fostered imports of consumer products from Japan and developing nations. Selling to a multitude of small stores, importers have to set up their own extensive marketing apparatus; larger buyers considerably simplify the process and reduce costs. Thus Japan first achieved a high penetration in the U.S. television market by selling in large volumes to chains such as Sears.

ANOTHER important insight involves the way U.S. companies make their investment decisions. American firms are often criticized for concentrating on short-term returns at the expense of riskier long-term gains. What helps explain this, Magaziner and Reich contend, is the practice of approving investments on a project-by-project basis, each with its own estimated rate of return.

> The system encourages incremental maintenance investments rather than fundamental reinvestment in the business. Investments are tailored to meet acceptable [profit] rates, rather than achieve strategic needs of the business.

In the same vein, they say that U.S. companies often react inappropriately to international competition. Facing new competition from low-priced imports, many U.S. firms decline to cut prices because this would initially reduce profits; but the failure allows the foreign competitor to gain a permanent part of the U.S. market at the expense of the U.S. company's long-term profits and viability. Likewise, many U.S. companies are said to refuse to bid on international projects that would yield only modest profits, while foreign (particularly Japanese) firms do. The consequence is to strengthen "the Japanese competition. . . . By virtue of added scale and experience, it is then in a better position to challenge the U.S. company in its domestic market."

The flaws of this book are more general. Its appraisal (and virtually everyone else's) that the United States has lost its once-overwhelming technological and economic lead is indisputably correct. But it's easy to overstate America's slippage, and there's a subtle and distorted demeaning of American competence simply by the piling up of problems. One bit of evidence usually cited (as it is here) as proof of decline is the string of large trade deficits since the mid-1970s. But these deficits mainly reflect higher-priced oil imports, a noncompetitive essential raw material. Since 1975, the country has run a deficit on manufactured goods in only one year.

What concerns Magaziner, Reich, and everyone else, of course, is the future. Unless the paralysis of productivity growth is reversed, living standards will stagnate. In seeking to explain pro-

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POET IN PRISON

Although the Cuban government has recently released a number of political prisoners, very few have been the more serious dissidents, some of whom like poet Armando Valladares, were leaders in the early days of the revolution.

In 1960 Valladares was sentenced to 30 years in prison. Along with many other dissidents, he has consistently refused to submit to the government's "rehabilitation" (re-education) programs. Confined to a dark cell, and later punished by being deprived of all nourishment, he was left an invalid.

His collection of poems, *From My Wheelchair*, was published in the United States in 1976. In 1979, another book, *Prisonnier de Castro*, appeared in Paris. His poetry has been translated into English, French and Portuguese. Dedicated to "his brothers in prison," many of these poems describe their suffering: some "died victims of torture while the sky remains blue and indifferent," others, without water and light, "harassed by the rats . . . died in the smallest corner of their cells. . . ."

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Democracy, Authority and Alienation in Work: Workers' Participation in An American Corporation by John F. Witte

(University of Chicago Press; 228 pp., $20)

This slim, modest volume is freighted with a heavy title, a battery of social science techniques and theories, and a depressing conclusion. Americans, contends John F. Witte, are not likely to acquire democratic control of their work anytime in the near future because we do not really hope for it. And we do not hope for it because we do not believe in it. Rather, we have placed our "faith in meritocracy, with its concomitant beliefs" about the purpose and legitimacy of the capitalist corporation. Our hope lies in the prospect of the higher wages each of us will merit if he or she works hard, and our charity begins and stays at home.

Witte, a political scientist now at the University of Wisconsin, reluctantly arrived at this psycho-theological explanation of workplace democracy's bleak future after spending more than a year as resident "participant/observer" in an experiment in "workers' participation" at a large electronics firm in Los Angeles. He first learned of the experiment at a 1974 conference of corporate managers, where the "president of a $100 million corporation" announced that he had "begun a program to 'humanize and democratize' work." Some months later, armed with a kind of neutrality ensured by government and foundation grants, Witte went to work at, but not for, the pseudonymous "Sound, Incorporated," a subsidiary of the unnamed president's corporation.

Witte was neutral but not indifferent. While he clearly made every effort to conduct a controlled scientific study, he admits that he cares about democracy and warns that we must be vigilant if we are to distinguish between real democracy on the job and the manipulation of workers by pretending to offer them democracy. He describes his research as "working full time for several years trying to make workers' participation succeed." Although the experiment continues in Los Angeles, Witte feels that he failed. His enthusiasm has turned into a mild, resigned cynicism.

What is remarkable about this *Bildungs*-monograph is not its painfully acquired conclusion, but rather the fact that its author ever thought that the experiment at SI might in any sense be a real test of the feasibility of "meaningful" democracy at work. Little he tells us about the firm, its nonunion workforce, or the activities undertaken under the "Quality of Working Life" program suggests that real democracy, or workers' control over their working life, was ever the goal, even of a temporary experiment.

It worked this way. Workers and managers elected a joint Planning Council to design and oversee experiments in participation and to respond to the demands, ideas, and complaints of its electorate—the entire work force. Special task forces attempted to introduce self-government or a "democratic style of supervision" in the actual production of amplifiers, speaker components, and cabinetry. Workers and managers together helped design a new facility and voted in a general election on the structure of the work week. For his part, Witte acted as full-time social scientist, "facilitator," and, in the eyes of some supervisors, an unwelcome meddler on the shop floor. He meticulously designed and administered questionnaires and conducted interviews before and at the end of his stint at SI to measure workers' "belief in participation," their "democratic values," and even their "self-estrangement in work."

The results of this elaborate and probably quite costly experiment were not entirely negative. Witte's "most optimistic conclusion" is based on "both quantitative and subjective analyses of tape recordings of joint worker-management meetings." These demonstrate, he insists, that "workers were nearly as effective as managers in the meetings," despite the fact that managers had "access to more information." In addition to thus settling the question of "worker competence" in the workers' favor, Witte also established that at the least the QWL program harmed neither productivity nor profits, both of which were up at the end. On the other hand the QWL program was plagued with problems that will likely bedevil even those attempts to establish real democracy at work: the difficulty of making representation both effective and authentic; the fact that meetings, especially democratic ones, consume time voraciously, or that democracy is hard because people have trouble communicating, and bicker, quarrel, get angry, yell at one another; and yes, that workers were "reluctant to remove existing forms of authority." Witte has shrewd and useful recommendations to make about all of these problems.

Workers learned that this well-intentioned experiment in participation did not mean democracy as soon as they tried to turn the Planning Council into a body with the power to adjudicate grievances. At that point, managers and supervisors on the Council simply blocked any changes that might diminish their power over workers. Witte's circumlocutious way of describing this is unfortunately typical: the Council's decisions that "triggered management's resistance" were "decisions which threatened critical organization norms by proposing permanent, formal shifts of influence within the corporation."

The issue here—and throughout the QWL program—was one of control and power, but Witte has difficulties stating matters so baldly. He prefers to talk in terms of perceptions, ideas, and values. He persistently shies away from words like struggle, control, and power and seems reluctant to speak of the capacity of capitalists and their managers to command resources and people. In his evasive lexicon the capitalist corporation becomes "the traditional corporation." The necessity of a political and social struggle to wrest power away from those who now possess it becomes virtually a problem of rhetoric.

RICHARD BIENVENU

Richard Bienvenu is professor of history at the University of Missouri.

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ductivity behavior, they argue that the fundamental trouble lies in the misallocation of America's investment. Not enough goes into long-range projects and growth industries; too much goes into dying industries and marginal projects. To reverse this, they urge a national "industrial policy" that would encourage investment in the highest value areas, while easing the social problems—mainly rising unemployment and the impact on localities of an eroding economic base—of disengaging from dying industries.

ALL THIS SOUNDS attractive enough, but there is little in their book (or anywhere else for that matter) that corroborates their perception of the problem. Neither do they provide any believable blueprint—beyond the broadest and blandest proposals—that the government could construct a workable industrial policy or that, if it could, it would be capable of carrying out such a policy. Rather, their extensive cataloguing of government economic development programs—most of which they regard as failures—leads almost inexorably to the opposite conclusion: that any program would soon be corrupted and crippled by political pressures and the practical problems of implementation.

It's plausible that poor investment decisions, rather than the overall level of investment, have contributed to America's productivity slump. But there have been poor investments before—remember the Edsel or General Electric's and RCA's efforts to enter the computer market?—and there's no clear indication that these have increased. So far, at least, no one has managed to find a persuasive single cause of the productivity problem. Edward Denison, probably the dean of productivity analysts, has rigorously examined most alleged causes and found them all wanting. Perhaps the most honest and revealing description is Lester Thurow's "death by a thousand cuts."

The mind craves simplicity and, in trying to simplify this for myself, I'm inclined to see four or five adverse trends converging. One is not controversial. From the end of World War II until the early 1970s, there was a large flow of people from low-productivity jobs in farming into more productive nonfarm jobs. This has now virtually halted, because most of the farm population has vanished, dropping from 15 percent of the total in 1950 to less than 4 percent now. But other alleged causes are more speculative:

The Baby Boom. In the 1970s, there was an enormous influx of people into the labor markets; the work force rose from 83 million to 105 million. Without a corresponding quickening of new investment, the amount of investment available to each worker would suffer. This happened: the so-called capital labor ratio actually declined slightly in the late 1970s. If the level of investment per worker relates to productivity—as most economists assume it does—then productivity growth was bound to suffer.

Oil Prices. Brookings Institution economist Martin Baily and others argue that the two sudden leaps in oil prices outmoded a significant segment of the industrial base. Some types of requirement depended upon inexpensive energy as a basic input. In other cases, the markets for the final product—gas-guzzling autos, for instance—suddenly shriveled. Excessive construction of electric utility plants, based on the assumption of low energy prices and fast growth, may also fit this pattern.

Regulation. The explosion of government pollution and safety regulations in the late 1960s and early 1970s caused business to devote a significantly higher proportion of their investment to plant and equipment that don't produce things that people buy and sell and, therefore, are not counted in the gross national product. These investments may have raised our living standards, if they reduced pollution or improved work place safety. But by the very way productivity is calculated (output divided by input) and by the popular materialistic evaluation of living standards, this was passive investment.

Inflation and Uncertainty. The climate for long-term investment in the 1950s and the 1960s was significantly better, because the country enjoyed low inflation rates and, in the 1960s, sustained expansion. High inflation may make business wary of long-term commitments, because they fear that high inflation will so suffocate growth that investments won't be able to earn adequate returns. High inflation—by raising tax deductible interest payments on home mortgages—may also have diverted additional investment funds into big homes.

If such a convergence prompted the productivity slump, there are grounds for modest hope in the 1980s. The baby boom will taper off. With some luck, there won't be another oil price explosion. The biggest burst of regulatory activity may be behind us. And inflation, nudged down in part by the recession, has subsided from double-digit levels to 8 to 9 percent—and may drop still further.

The hope, of course, could be false. Michael Boretsky, a Commerce Department economist, traces postwar productivity growth to a number of basic technological changes—for example, the substitution of oil and gas for more labor-intensive coal—that he doesn't think will soon be repeated. In some respects, the country is going backward (more coal, less oil and gas), and he doesn't believe that prospective advances in, say, electronics will do much more than offset the slippage.

To say that government doesn't affect all this is, of course, an absurdity. Good government creates the climate of stability that fosters risk-taking and creativity, and the sheer size of government programs—both spending and taxes—profoundly influences the economy. But, though government can clearly affect some individual markets, it doesn't follow that it can control the whole process of productivity growth.

This is the Achilles' heel of industrial policy. An industrial policy presumes that government can devise measures to promote particular industries, or specific activities, that will result in general gains. But the economy is simply too complicated and the process of growth too ambiguous to do this. The paucity of specific suggestions in Magaziner's and Reich's otherwise detailed book is a tacit admission of this; numerous other studies point in the same direction.

The political dangers are no less clear. Those shaping any industrial policy—

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businesses, labor unions, government agencies—instinctively act out of self-interest: that is, to increase their own income or power. Most rhetoric about a higher national interest is just that, rhetoric, even if it is uttered in good faith. Not surprisingly, Magaziner and Reich find that many current government assistance programs follow this pattern; thus DISC—a tax break for exporters—seems to provide more tax relief than export stimulation. The government programs with the most favorable economic effects—that is, the defense, space, and highway programs—weren't primarily conceived to spur economic development. Defense and space spending, for instance, provided most of the early market for electronic integrated circuits.

Nor are Magaziner and Reich convincing when they argue that the touted industrial policies of countries like Japan and Germany constitute a fundamental source of those nations' prosperity and growth. In essence, the truth here is very simple: countries with strong, vibrant economies have an easier time running industrial policies (whatever they may be), because there are new and expanding industries to absorb the labor and capital resources shed by declining industries.

Government bureaucrats can guess wrong about the futures of particular industries as easily as private business (or perhaps more easily). In Japan, the powerful Ministry of International Trade and Industry actually unsuccessfully resisted the efforts of the automobile industry to expand. According to Magaziner and Reich, the severe problems of the steel industries in France and Britain resulted in part from poor government decisions—governments decided to expand steel investment when they should have reduced it. To say that government bureaucracies ought to make correct decisions is not to say that they will.

IS THERE NOTHING the government can do then? Not exactly. Magaziner and Reich, among others, argue that one proper role for government is to foster activities where the return to the whole society is greater than the return to individual concerns. Research and development—particularly basic research—is one of these, and efforts to reduce such spending may be disastrously shortsighted. The education of skilled workers may be another area in which the government usefully can intervene.

The government could also constructively *stop* doing some things. Many of the programs of assistance mentioned by Magaziner and Reich—export and small business promotion, for instance—are proper candidates for the scrap heap. Not only are they ineffective, but they may make matters worse by diverting attention from fundamental problems. Most of the management mistakes cited by the two authors in this analysis cannot be solved by government, and programs that delude executives into believing relief will come from somewhere else may simply delay self-examination and correction.

But no one should expect miraculous results from these or any other steps. The very ambiguity of the productivity problem hampers the government's efforts to deal with it. The issue is nothing less than the process by which new wealth is created. It is to economics what happiness is to psychology: a subject of inexhaustible thought but also of ultimate mystery.

ROBERT J. SAMUELSON

Robert J. Samuelson writes on economic subjects for *National Journal*.

AGAINST MORAL RELATIVISM

Essays on Moral Development, Volume 1 The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice by Lawrence Kohlberg

(Harper & Row, 441 pp., $21.95)

Lawrence Kohlberg, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, believes that psychological research on "stages" of moral development has important implications for philosophy, educational theory, political science, and constitutional law. This research is relevant to philosophy, he believes, because it refutes the philosophical doctrine of moral relativism. It is relevant to educational theory, because it shows how moral education is possible through Socratic dialogue. For political science his results indicate that in the long-term there will continue to be a trend toward liberalism. As for constitutional law, the same results support the view that capital punishment is unconstitutional, according to Kohlberg.

Extending ideas of Jean Piaget, Kohlberg identifies six stages of moral development, each stage representing a distinctive way of thinking. According to Kohlberg, people of very different cultures pass through these stages in an invariant sequence. Not everyone reaches the sixth and highest stage, but a person gets to a given stage only by passing through the earlier stages. Kohlberg claims furthermore that, although people at any intermediate stage may disagree about particular moral issues and even basic principles, people at the sixth and highest stage always agree both on particular cases and on principles.

Kohlberg also says that, when people are able to understand the reasoning of a higher stage, they invariably judge such reasoning to be more adequate than the reasoning they are currently familiar with. He believes people can be shown to be right in this judgment and that it is possible to offer a philosophical justification for the claim that higher stages are more adequate morally than lower stages. This leads him to suggest that development from one stage to the next involves recognizing the limits and inadequacies of the one stage and the greater adequacy of the next. Finally, he presents empirical evidence that moral development from one stage to the next can be stimulated by exposing people to moral thinking at the next higher stage. He concludes that moral education should proceed not by trying to inculcate specific values in students but by a kind of Socratic dialogue that exposes them to moral reasoning

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slightly more advanced than their current level.

Kohlberg's evidence for his stages comes from a 20-year study of 75 American males. He has also studied people in various cultures, including inhabitants of a Malaysian aboriginal village. His method has been to present subjects with moral dilemmas and to ask them to say what they think about them.

In one example, subjects are asked to suppose a woman needs a certain medicine or she will die. Her husband tries to buy it but the price is more than he can afford. The question is whether the husband is justified in stealing the medicine if there is no other way to obtain it. Subjects are not simply asked to say "yes" or "no" but are also asked for their reasons. Answers given by subjects range from the suggestion that the husband should not steal the medicine because if he does he will be punished (Stage I) to the opinion that he should steal the medicine because human life is the ultimate value (Stage VI).

IN ORDER TO appreciate Kohlberg's view, we need to see what exactly the six stages are. They can be divided into three pairs, representing "preconventional" conceptions of morality (Stages I and II) with no conception of moral rules or standards; "conventional" conceptions of morality (Stages III and IV), in which morality is conceived as a set of social virtues and rules; and "postconventional" conceptions of morality (Stages V and VI), in which the conventional rules and standards are themselves seen to be subject to justification and criticism in the light of deeper moral values.

The two preconventional stages are these. At Stage I you take doing what's right to be a matter of not harming others, obeying authority and its rules, and avoiding punishment. At Stage II doing what is right includes making fair deals in terms of concrete exchange and the satisfying of immediate needs.

The conventional conceptions of morality are centered around virtue and character (Stage III) or social rules and principles (Stage IV). So at Stage III the right thing to do is be good or "nice," to be concerned with other people and their feelings, to be loyal and to trust partners, and to be motivated to satisfy social expectations. At Stage IV you also acquire a conception of society and of social rules and you suppose that these rules are justified by the way in which

ROCKY HARBOUR, NEWFOUNDLAND

How disastrous it looks—
the rust washed into the rocks,
and the wrecked ship itself, picked clean.
It was 1911
when the Evangeline beached here,
a leviathan at Rocky Harbour;
and all the air-crashes since, the more
catastrophic statistics, deaths by falling and fire,
cannot extinguish the primeval
power, like a monumental skull,
of a hull
the seas coldly rejected. Not content
to leave it lying, bent
on reducing it now to an element
of itself, the omnivorous water hurls
its weight on the gutted belly; and hissing, curls
its white fingers back, and pulls.

But whatever it reclaims
is invisible now that the frame's
becoming simply another stark
contour on the shoreline: an ark
divested of animals, foreign trinkets,
sailors or (in this case) families on junkets
round the Gulf of St. Lawrence,
and eroding—though with a sense
of the dramatic—toward what could be an odd
rock that resembles a ship, as a cloud
might pass for a sheep or a whale.

No one could miss the DANGER—all
the signs proclaim it—
but there may be some doubt as to what
the Preservationists hope to avert:
any harm to child-scavengers
scaling the beams, or the first disaster's
loss of its intact
and forbidding message. How astonishing then
to encounter in fine
print the overlooked fact
that the disaster's not one
at all. Not one
of the passengers, numbering sixty-seven,
perished; not even the baby
posted ashore in a mailbag. Maybe
any such delivery
from evil is apocryphal, but a detail
so painstakingly improbable
is rarely wrong;
and who knows? we too may be numbered among
the legendary company of the delivered.

MARY JO SALTER

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they promote the welfare of the group.

At the end of Stage IV you begin thinking about the whole system of societal morality and its justification. You might become skeptical or relativistic at this point; or you might "progress" to (postconventional) Stage V in which you will take people as having rights that are prior to society and you will think that true morality upholds these basic rights as well as contracts even if they conflict with society's current morality. You will recognize that the moral point of view may conflict with the legal point of view and with social custom. At Stage V you might assess social rules in terms of the extent to which people consent to them, or you might become a utilitarian and assess rules in terms of the degree to which they promote social utility.

Stage VI occurs when at last you "recognize" that there are universal ethical principles all humanity ought to follow, principles of respect for other persons as ends in themselves. These principles turn out to be the basic principles of contemporary liberalism, as expressed, for example, in John Rawls's *Theory of Justice*. Social rules are judged by considering whether you would find them acceptable if you did not know your place in society. According to Kohlberg, this test rules out capital punishment, for example, because you could not accept capital punishment for yourself if it should turn out that you were convicted of murder.

THIS, THEN, is Kohlberg's basic theory. It has implications for moral philosophy because it leads to an indirect argument against moral relativism. The argument is this. Kohlberg's theory assumes some conceptions of morality are more adequate than others and that one in particular is more adequate than *any* other. His theory also assumes moral development consists in obtaining a better and better conception of morality. These assumptions would explain the empirical evidence Kohlberg has collected. So the evidence is evidence for those assumptions and against moral relativism. In other words, Kohlberg believes his theory provides the only plausible explanation of this evidence and so should be accepted by way of an inference as the best explanation. Since his theory is incompatible with moral relativism, he concludes that moral relativism should be rejected.

However, it is unclear that Kohlberg's evidence really supports such a strong conclusion. Obviously, the key issue concerns what happens after Stage IV, because development from Stage I (obedience to authority) to Stage IV (acceptance of the authority of the moral rules of your society) involves nothing more than coming to appreciate conventional morality. And Kohlberg's data do not indicate that there is one direction of development from Stage IV on. Development from that point occurs when people raise questions about the rules of their society and become aware of alternative possibilities. Kohlberg's data (and common observation as well) show that at this point people in fact go off in various directions. Some wonder whether there are not other better arrangements either for themselves or for others. Some come to ask what reason they have to follow the conventional rules. Some come to favor changes in conventional morality for one or another reason. Some try to reach their own arrangements with a "counterculture." Many people become moral relativists. Many regress to something like the egoism of Stage II. (Kohlberg says these people are at "Stage 4½"!) Some become utilitarians and take morality to be concerned with the promotion of general happiness. Some decide that moral rules are binding only on those who consent to them. Others decide on any number of different options.

Kohlberg's Stage V is not a specially privileged option here. Indeed Stage V is not a single option but a collection of some of these options, presumably those that Kohlberg is most in sympathy with. Stage VI presumably represents the sort of thinking *he* thinks is most adequate morally. There is nothing in the data themselves that supports a privileged position for Stages V and VI.

True, Kohlberg does offer an independent philosophical argument for the greater adequacy of Stages V and VI. But this argument says merely that there is a certain conception of morality, favored by Kohlberg and a few other people, which is more in accord with Stage V reasoning than with the reasoning at earlier stages, and which is even more in accord with Stage VI reasoning. However, Kohlberg offers no interesting defense of his preferred conception of morality as opposed to some other conception. He does mention several philosophers who favor that conception, but there are many philosophers (and others) who favor other conceptions. So Kohlberg really provides no reason at all for supposing moral relativism is false.

Futhermore, there seem to be serious defects in Kohlberg's favored conception of morality at Stage VI. At this stage you are supposed to test social rules by considering whether you could agree to the rules if you did not know your place in a society regulated by them. Kohlberg claims that this test yields definite answers and that each person at Stage VI will reach the same conclusions about principles and cases. But this is well known to be false. If there is anything that discussion of Rawls's work has made clear, it is that people notoriously disagree about how this test should be applied. Should you attempt to maximize your expected benefit by multiplying your chance of occupying a given social position by the benefits of that position? That would yield classical utilitarianism, which is at Stage V, according to Kohlberg, so presumably that is not the way he thinks the test should be applied, although there are many people who would in fact apply it in that way. Should you then assume you will be in the worst social position and choose rules that maximize benefits to those in this worst position? Some such idea occurs in Rawls's theory, which correctly characterizes Stage VI, according to Kohlberg. But the idea does not really provide a workable test. The trouble is that the position of the worst-off person in society is almost always going to be one of absolute misery or death, so societies cannot be evaluated simply by looking at the position of the worst off person.

CONSIDER Kohlberg's discussion of capital punishment. He says you cannot accept capital punishment as a punishment for murder even if it has a powerful deterrent effect compared with other possible punishments, because, if you were to consider how this rule would apply to a society in which you did not know your place, you would have to allow for the possibility that you might turn out to be a murderer. But, by an exactly similar argument, you cannot accept a system without capital punishment, assuming it has such a deterent effect, because if you were to consider such a system applying to a society in which you did not know your place, you would have to allow for

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the possibility that you might turn out to be a murder victim. The murder victim is the relevant worst-off person in the one case; the executed murder is the relevant worst-off person in the other case. Neither is worse off than the other, since they are both dead. Simply looking at the relevant worst case and assuming that you occupy that position does not help you choose between these two systems or between almost any two real life systems.

Unhappily, Kohlberg's failure with his philosophical argument affects his proposals about moral education. Some people say children should not be encouraged to try to work out their own conceptions of morality but should be taught the majority's morality, no questions asked or allowed. Against this, Kohlberg advocates stimulating "moral development" by exposing students to samples of reasoning at the next higher stage. But, having lost the philosophical dispute, he has no way to argue that such stimulation leads to moral "development." In particular, he has no reasons to offer the Moral Majority why they should agree to an education that promises to take their children past Stage IV to the point where it is quite likely they will become skeptical or will come to accept more liberal views.

What, then, about the future of liberalism? I have mentioned Kohlberg's argument that there will continue to be a trend toward greater liberalism because exposure to advanced moral reasoning will lead more and more people to reach Stages V and VI, which represent more and more liberal conceptions of morality. Now, the empirical data do not support the conclusion that such a trend to liberal moral thinking will occur simply as the result of a natural development in thinking from earlier stages. But it is nevertheless likely that there will be a continued trend toward liberalism. The real underlying trend is one toward the increased questioning of conventional morality. When members of social groups badly treated by conventional morality come to question that morality, many of them will try to change conventional standards so that they will be more favorable to their own group; and that promises to yield a more liberal moral consensus.

GILBERT HARMAN

Gilbert Harman is professor of philosophy at Princeton University.

THE ULTIMATE IRONIST

God's Fifth Column
A Biography of the Age: 1890-1940
by William Gerhardie
edited and with an introduction by Michael Holroyd and Robert Skidelsky

(Simon & Schuster, 512 pp., $15.95)

In the years between the two world wars, William Gerhardie was a writer of considerable status in England. His place, you might say, was somewhere between Michael Arlen and Evelyn Waugh: as worldly as Arlen, but a better writer; as witty as Waugh, but less English. During those years Gerhardie wrote copiously—novels and stories, plays, criticism, a history, a memoir—and the best of what he wrote was admired and imitated (Waugh, for one, frankly acknowledged his debt).

Then, at the end of the 1930s, he fell silent, and though he lived on for nearly 40 years, he published nothing more. He had, it seems, outlived his gift; and in time he also outlived his reputation. In recent years Michael Holroyd has labored to restore Gerhardie to the attention of serious readers by issuing a "definitive edition" of the works, of the sort that only very established writers usually achieve; but my sense of the situation is that the campaign has not been successful, and that Gerhardie remains at most a period-piece, locked in the history of his brief productive years.

Gerhardie had a special role in the literary world between the wars—he was a cosmopolitan (a role that has never been an easy one for the English to play). The autobiographical narrator of his best novel, *Futility*, explains how this came about:

> I happen to belong to that elusive class of people knowing several languages who, when challenged in one tongue, find it convenient to assure you that their knowledge is all in another. And I am one of those uncomfortable people whose national 'atmosphere' has been somewhat knocked on the head —an Englishman brought up and schooled in Russia, and born there, incidentally, of British parents (with a mixed un-English name into the bargain!), and here I am.

This is exact personal history. Gerhardie was born in St. Petersburg in 1895, and came to England in his late teens, only to enter the army and return to Russia—first as military attaché to the British Embassy, and then with the British Military Mission to Siberia in the chaotic postwar years. He was 24 when he returned to England to enter Oxford and to write his first novel. It was too late by then to become an Englishman, and the Russia that he had known no longer existed; he could only be what he proclaimed himself to be—a polyglot, an international exotic without roots, except in literature.

Futility, his first novel, is based on Gerhardie's wartime life in Russia, but its Russian foundations are deeper than that. It owes much to Russian literature, and especially to Chekhov (the *Three Sisters* runs all through the book) and to Goncharov. It is, in fact, a kind of elegy for the world of *Oblomov* and the *Cherry Orchard*, that lost Russia in which everything was expected, and nothing happened—it is the best Russian novel ever written in English. Later novels and stories change the scene, but preserve the tone—that curious Chekhovian note of melancholy comedy that no other writer in English has managed.

In the autumn of 1939 Gerhardie set out to write yet another book—not a novel this time, but a "biography of the age." World War II had just begun, and it must have seemed to him that an age—*his* age—had come to an end. He began to write, found reasons for stopping, returned to the manuscript, stopped, reorganized it, wrote, stopped

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again. He was apparently still stopping and starting 40 years later, when he died. It is a classic case of a writer committed to a conception that he can't make work, unable either to complete it or abandon it; rather like some human situation in one of his Russian writers, a marriage or a debt, at once endless and impossible. At his death the manuscript was found, vast and unfinished; the editors have reduced its length by a quarter in preparing it for publication, but even so it is very long, very fragmented (there are 96 chapters!), and alas, very shapeless.

INEVITABLY, PERHAPS. Of course, you can't write a biography of an age: ages don't have biographies. But Gerhardie wanted to believe that they do—and that he could write such a biography of his own lifetime by abandoning the causal and chronological structures of history and adopting instead a kind of pointillist technique, arranging many fragments together. Some of these are character sketches, some are narrated events, some are bits of personal philosophy, some literary criticisms. Occasionally efforts at connection are made: Lenin and Proust are compared ("born within a year and dead within eighteen months of each other, each applied himself to the same essential task of abstracting from the common illusion this evil error of an imagined superiority of birth"—whatever that means), and Margot Asquith is followed by the Empress Frederick. Historical conjunctions are pointed out: that Proust was 23 when Nicholas ascended the throne; that Asquith moved to No. 10 Downing Street at the same time that D. H. Lawrence moved to the Davidson Row School in Croydon and Hitler settled into the casual ward of a Vienna dosshouse. All one can say of this Historical Imagism is that it doesn't work: a chaos of juxtapositions is still a chaos.

Such organization as the book has derives from the recurrences of the principle alluded to in the title. God's Fifth Column is not a very clear concept, but the general sense of the phrase as Gerhardie uses it is that an ironic principle operates in the human world, frustrating human desires, destroying what is corrupt, perhaps clearing the way for better things. Artists are its special agents, and the book celebrates their creative/destructive role; but behind them is the Ultimate Ironist. The name of God is continually invoked, and Gerhardie seems to consider himself a Christian, but his God is a remote and uncomforting figure, the Great Chess-player in the Sky, the Cosmic Black Comedian.

The best fragments in the book are those in which this ironic principle is shown at work in brief vignettes from the lives of political figures and artists: how Tolstoy, after a life of intermittent debauchery, discovered that it was not right; how Woodrow Wilson killed himself trying to make America at once international and moral; how on particular occasions Kaiser Wilhelm and Czar Nicholas behaved, and what followed. But though irony will organize an anecdote, it can't give adequate structure to an age. If God's Fifth Column is always and everywhere in operation, if it defeats every human effort, then it isn't a historical principle at all, and can only be written about in ironic fragments like these.

The worst bits occur when the romantic (who lurks in the heart of every ironist) takes over: when, for example, Gerhardie goes on about "the perennial youth whose other name is genius," or launches into embarrassing program-note-like commentaries on his favorite music ("in four swinging, awe-inspiring notes the passing soul announces its diffident approach at the gates of heaven"—this of Mozart's *Concertante Sinfonie for Violin and Viola*), or praises one of his literary heroes. The prose, which can be sharp and aphoristic when the ironist is in charge, becomes clogged and sluggish, the verbs drift away from their subjects, and the text begins to read like a translation of a German translation of a Russian metaphysician. The polyglot here reveals the dangers of polyglottery.

Nevertheless, there is an interesting man floundering here—an angry, haranguing misanthrope whose world had disintegrated around him, and who mirrors that disintegration in his shapeless, unfinished book. He is good at hating the present (which, remember, was 1940, not exactly a lovable time), but he can only praise what is past—the dead writers, the defeated idealists. "Nothing is," he says somewhere, "until it is over": no wonder he admired Proust so much. And no wonder that his accounts of writers dwell on their deaths (the deaths of Tolstoy, Chekhov, Proust, and Wilde are all lingeringly rendered here). Altogether, it makes a sad spectacle—Gerhardie, already dead as an artist, brooding over the deaths of other, greater artists, and on the dark ironies of his own time. Such sad brooding does not make this a good book, or a coherent one; but it makes it a moving one.

SAMUEL HYNES

Samuel Hynes is the author of *The Auden Generation* (Viking).

A NOVEL OF EAST AND WEST

The Dean's December by Saul Bellow

(Harper & Row, 312 pp., $13.95)

At 67 Saul Bellow is now in that late stage of an artist's development when the communication of essential vision becomes the pressing business of his imagination. This has entailed a loss of that sensuous immediacy of plastic representation which was once his trademark, the air, in Alfred Kazin's words, "of having lived, of experiencing the big city in every pore, of being on the spot." This air is absent from *The Dean's December*. It has few of the powerfully realized images, scenes, or characters we expect in a Bellow book. It's almost as if Bellow is withholding his famous intensity from the novel's merely fictive elements in order to pour it into the passages of thought. These are the heart of the novel. It must be said that they are remarkable for their strenuous profundity, and for their sweep and bite, but it must also be said that they are written in a frustratingly elliptical intellectual shorthand (what he calls in

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another novel "short views") that makes it difficult for a reader who does not share Bellow's obsessions to follow him or to enjoy his mental celerity. Moreover, the obsessions are not dramatized, made believably objective, like those of Artur Sammler, the hero of Bellow's fine 1969 novel, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*. Sammler's views had an authority that was inseparable from our sense that he had had the tragic education of a Polish Jew who had barely escaped the Nazis.

BY COMPARISON, Bellow's central character in this novel, Albert Corde, a former international journalist who has become the dean of a Chicago university, is a thin invention. You look right through him to Bellow. One of Corde's themes is the necessity of imagination and poetry in making the crisis of our time real to our newspaper besotted minds, so it is ironic that Bellow himself sacrifices poetry and imagination in order unimpededly to convey his disturbing vision. It is as if, like Tolstoy, Bellow has come to distrust artifice as a distraction from truth. Still, it is possible to take little novelistic pleasure from *The Dean's December* and yet be moved by Bellow's drive to tell his grave, urgent, and important truth.

Corde's, that is to say, Bellow's, views are so much the center of the novel that discussion must begin with them. When the novel opens with the 58-year-old dean and his wife, a distinguished émigré scientist, in Bucharest to see her dying mother, and when, several pages on, we discover that Corde is preoccupied with the Chicago trial of a black pimp accused of murdering one of his students, we expect a treatment of the differences between East and West. Many explicit contrasts are indeed made by the discursive dean, and there are contrasting characters and incidents as well. The surprise is that these don't follow the ideological pattern we're ready to accept in such juxtapositions, especially now, with Poland on our minds. Instead the East comes out looking better than the West. Bellow hates the Communist dictatorship, of course. And he has Corde deliver a variant of Orwell's master image of totalitarianism, a jackboot coming down on the human face, "Even after a few days you feel them sitting on your face." But he doesn't quite get the Communist world into focus; his feeling toward the West is far more specific and intimate in its vehemence.

His overall view is close to Solzhenitsyn's. "The hard nihilism" of the dictatorships has at least produced a hard fiber in the souls of its victims; and, in the Russian fashion, their suffering has also made them more ready to "acknowledge the claims of feeling." The "soft nihilism" of the West, by contrast, has spawned spiritual and social anarchy. In the East evil has a political face; it is a situation of moral clarity. You're a good man if you say no to the state. But in the West evil is masked by the noise of the media—worse, it is exploited for entertainment and profit—and who knows what you have to do to be a good man, to live a human life.

Our situation is dire. A tide of evil is washing over us. The evil is in the "whirling" souls of the black underclass, in the sophisticated brutality of our business and professional classes, in the national craze for cruelty and gross sexuality, in the shit-reek of our streets, the triviality of our professors and men of knowledge, and in the smooth deceitful words of our journalists, who plaster over our anxieties with platitudes and keep us from a full consciousness of our condition. "In the American moral crisis," the Dean tells us, "the first requirement was to experience what was happening and to see what must be seen."

DEAN CORDE has written two essays for *Harper's* in which he sets "the noble ideas of mankind" against the sordid realities of Chicago's slums and jails in order to awaken the moral conscience of the West. This, I take it, is also Bellow's aim in *The Dean's December*. His sense of the current crisis is apocalyptic.

> We've been brought up for generations on Cecil B. De Mille's special effects—The Sign of the Cross, Lions and Christian Martyrs, the Destruction of Sodom, the Last Days of Pompeii. This poor make believe, however, is a dangerous distraction. Because this is a time of the breaking of nations. It's all true.

Corde's *Harper's* articles are condemned for their "abyssifying," and in recording the reaction to the articles, Bellow is anticipating the objections many readers will have to *The Dean's December*.

He anticipates these objections; he does not try to answer them. Some of its prophetic fervor might have been lost, but I think the novel would have gained intellectually if Bellow had dealt with these objections seriously, instead of depicting them as purely defensive or plain foolish. For all its brilliance and erudition, Bellow's mind in this book is remarkably unproblematic in its gloom; it lacks resistance from either his intellect or his affections. With his form of a jeremiad within a jeremiad, Bellow could easily have introduced such pressure by having Corde answer his critics. But he doesn't, and the novel, as *thought*, loses in force as a result. It is a failure of intellectual objectivity which parallels Bellow's failure to get out of Corde's mind and render the novel objectively.

MEANWHILE, back in Bucharest. . . . It's easy to debark Bellow's fictional vehicle to pursue his views. Who has time for art when Western civilization is going down the tubes? In fact, in the intervals between Corde's attacks of prophecy, Saul Bellow has time for art, and some of the scenes in Bucharest, the setting of nearly the whole present time of the novel, are deftly, if not vividly, done.

During his month's stay in Bucharest, Corde's mind is variously agitated by the approaching death of Valeria, his mother-in-law; by the monstrously petty restrictions which a malign officer of the security apparat puts in the way of the Cordes' visiting the hospitalized woman; by his wife's rapid physical and emotional deterioration under the strain; and by the continuing trial in Chicago of the black in whose arrest Corde had played a major and controversial part. Bellow's strongest senses in the novel are for smell and temperature, with hot and cold coming to stand for the different states of the spirit in the West and the East. But in the chill apartment where the Cordes stay, the home of Valeria and her aged sister, there is a rare genuine warmth. Along with several of the cousins and friends who are forever visiting the tiny place, these women with their cakes and teas and their instinctive solicitudes and compunctions represent the right human measure for Bellow. They possess the "archaic knowledge" of how to live; and, crucial to Bellow, they know how to do their duty by the dying, like Mr. Sammler. Bellow is moved by them. For him they show what people unspoiled by a deranged culture are capable of. They live from the heart, along what the early Bellow hero Augie March called "the axial lines of life." Bellow was trained as an anthropologist and he

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knows that the soul of man is in the grip of culture and that culture can bury those axial lines deeper than memory.

Culture has nearly obliterated them in Corde's Chicago, which we see in snippets from the *Harper's* pieces, and in long recollected conversations with a diverse cast of Chicagoans. They include: the former superintendent of the city jail, a black reformer whom Corde, in *Harper's*, defends from charges of brutality; the public defender of a murderer; Corde's wealthy sister; and her son, a little Lake Forest punk who makes an obnoxious advocate for the black accused of killing the Dean's student. Chicago in its particularity is not Bellow's target. "It's no longer a location," a columnist friend of Corde's remarks, "it's only a condition." An external jungle, Chicago reflects the internal one of Western feeling. Against the environmental determinism of so much liberal cant, the novel veers toward an Hegelian picture of things. Bellow's slums seem to have sprung from the whirling souls of the black underclass rather than the souls from the slums. Bellow is here defending the idea of individual responsibility (which is all too often a pitiless piece of cant on the lips of conservative ideologues) from those who would reduce the individual to the *tabula rasa* of his class or condition. The prison superintendent, a man who tried to clean up the jail but was fired because the local pols suspected he had political ambitions, is not so much a character as a symbol of the kind of "moral initiative" Bellow thinks it will take to reclaim the wasteland.

THE TWO deaths in the novel, of the student, Rick Lester, and of Valeria, light up the East-West theme. A devout Catholic, Rick Lester is nevertheless driven to "the gates of death" by the culture's "sex compulsion." One torrid Chicago night, restless, he leaves his sleeping wife for a local bar, and returns with a black prostitute and her pimp, kinky sex apparently on his mind. Instead he is bound, gagged, and thrown out the third-floor window. Corde identifies the body, is moved by the hint of tragic knowledge on the dead boy's face, and puts up a reward for his killers. Naturally the student newspaper calls him a racist. It's all there—the sex compulsion, the available black lumpen, the murder, the charges of racism: a grotesque paradigm of our urban condition. Corde throws it into apocalyptic relief. The black underclass, he writes in *Harper's*, are a "doomed" population, whirling toward death because the culture has not bound them to life.

COMING:
Richard Ellmann
on James Joyce.

VALERIA'S death fits an Eastern paradigm. Although members of the old bourgeoisie, she and her husband, both doctors, threw flowers at the "liberating" Russians in 1945. They were idealists: the Revolution had come. For a time both served the new Stalinist order, she succeeding him as Minister of Health after his death. But in the early 1950s she lost her post in a purge. Retirement in the dim apartment followed, and a long period of atonement for her part in establishing the regime. Politics, however, follows her to the grave, as she is refused extra visitors in a hospital she founded. The state, Corde philosophizes, sets the pain level in the East.

Corde's connection to the mute Valeria is the strongest and most convincingly depicted emotional tie in the novel. Corde thinks that Valeria is afraid of leaving her daughter alone in the world, unprotected, in the care of this perhaps untrustworthy American dean. He wants desperately to signal her that she needn't worry about him. Yes, he's been a womanizer in the past, but no more. He's a steady man now. He loves her daughter, and when he clasps Valeria's hand and whispers that he loves her too, the dials on the machines she's hooked up to race wildly. Moving in itself, Corde's connection to Valeria also has a general significance. She mistrusts him, in part, because he is an American and so has a touch of the "advanced modern consciousness," which he defines as a

> reduced consciousness inasmuch as it contained only the minimum of furniture that civilization was able to install (practical judgments, bare outlines of morality, sketches, cartoons instead of human beings); and this consciousness, because its equipment was humanly so meager, so abstract, was basically murderous.

So we return to Bellow's dark vision. What are we to say of it? It's tempting to repeat what Norman Podhoretz said 30 years ago about the "affirmative" vision of Augie March—that it is forced, willed, political, a press release from the Committee to Save Western Civilization. But this would be wrong, for two reasons. First, it is hard to argue with Bellow. Who that prides himself on realism can deny the large claim of truth in Bellow's imagination of disaster? Who can dispute his sense that our political problems are nearly identical with our philosophical problems, and that, a practical people, we have no taste for philosophy? Second, there is a strong aesthetic reason for accepting these views as imaginatively authentic. In a fine recent book, *Fiction as Wisdom*, Irvin Stock, one of Bellow's most sympathetic critics, argues that "the ideas in Bellow's work are themselves a source of fictional vitality—he has a gift for evoking in his sentence rhythms as well as in his words the experience of thought." Austere in tone, clipped in length as well as in feeling, and often broken in rhythm, the sentences in this novel mirror the experience of the most somber thought. Perhaps that is why they gave me so little pleasure. Considering the preoccupations of *The Dean's December*, it was foolish of me to keep hoping for the jaunty tones of Moses Herzog, Bellow's most memorable character, but I did. For Herzog's is the voice of moral sanity, of human balance and perspective. And I could hear it exasperatedly reminding the doomsaying Corde, and also Bellow, that

> we must not forget how quickly the visions of genius become the canned goods of the intellectuals. The canned sauerkraut of Spengler's Prussian socialism, the commonplaces of the Wasteland outlook, the cheap mental stimulants of Alienation, the cant and rant of the pipsqueaks about Inauthenticity and Forlornness. I can't accept this foolish dreariness. We are talking about the whole life of mankind. The subject is too great, too deep, for such weakness, cowardice. . . . A merely aesthetic critique of modern history! After the wars and mass killings! You are too intelligent for this. You inherited rich blood. Your father peddled apples.

JACK BEATTY

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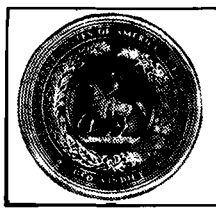

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Courage

THE IDEA OF HEROISM has fallen on hard times lately. Its nadir occurred almost exactly one year ago, when the hostages (remember them?) were welcomed home as heroes. Perhaps it was only a designation by default, since we didn't quite know what other word to use and it seemed impolite to call them what they obviously were—victims. Their ordeal had all the markings of victimhood: they entered into it through no choice of their own; they were thoroughly passive throughout (as we were); and their release, like their capture, occurred independently of any action on their part. To be sure, they merited our support and sympathy for their suffering. But hardly 21-gun salutes for their heroism. The universal celebration of their courage could only have occurred in an era of survivor chic, when the idea is in vogue that there is no higher human achievement than making it through life. From Southampton to Malibu, radical chic, like wide ties, has come and gone. Survivor chic is in. We have such a heavy schedule of crises to be gotten through nowadays—identity, midlife, and so on—that only a select few can manage the time, the energy (the courage!) to work through them all. But those who make it through ("through" is the operative word in survivorship) a couple of broken marriages, a mudslide on the beachhouse, and perhaps a facelift or two, earn the title of survivor and the general acclaim that goes with it. Now, to those who would object that the breathlessly autobiographical hot tub set has trivialized the notion of survival, I would reply that the idea of survival as an achievement, rather than a mere condition, is a trivialization to begin with. I suspect it derives, at least in part, from the popularized Darwinian notion that survival is a reward for fitness and thus a token of achievement. When applied to human affairs, that idea is either pernicious (since it implies that those who perish somehow deserve it) or silly. And the silliness is evident not only when an aged starlet triumphantly tells Merv Griffin that she is a survivor, but also when a country, in its relief, mistakes hostages for heroes. A year later, and perhaps shamed by the example of Sakharov and Walesa, we know better.

I DON'T MEAN to be unfair. The hostages themselves are quite innocent of the charge of survivor chic. First, their suffering was more than merely existential. There is a world of difference between sitting blindfolded in a room listening to a million marchers chant for your death and, say, struggling to get in touch with your feelings in wood-paneled twice-a-week therapy. Furthermore, the hostages, for the most part, seemed genuinely bewildered by the notion that merely pulling through had made them heroes. That was last year, however. Their first books on their captivity should be appearing soon, and we'll see if in the interim they have come to share our general confusion on the subject of heroism. After all, a country that confers the Congressional Medal of Honor on one actor who played the role of hero for the cameras and confers the Presidency on another, betrays a certain inability to distinguish real from counterfeit heroes.

WE ALSO HAVE trouble distinguishing courage, which requires choice, from tenacity, which doesn't. In the wide acclaim accorded such recent stage and film productions as *The Elephant Man, Whose Life Is It, Anyway?, Inside Moves,* and the DeBolts documentaries, an unlikely series of protagonists have almost invariably been characterized as courageous. I think that's a mistake. For those from whom unkind fate has taken almost everything, necessity does the work of courage, to use George Eliot's phrase. This is not to deny the perseverance and determination and nobility of these characters, but it is to question the current fashion that being is in itself an act of courage. Courage is different. It is, simply understood, the willingness to risk one's self for someone or something other—for example, to pledge one's life, fortune, and sacred honor for the independence of one's country. I am, admittedly, insisting on a small distinction. But an important one, I think. I revere courage, and I would like to reserve the word for people like Thomas Jefferson and Lenny Skutnick.

LENNY SKUTNICK is not one of the original signers of the Declaration of Independence. And last week, when he jumped into the freezing Potomac River to save a drowning survivor of the Air Florida crash, he risked neither his fortune nor his sacred honor. But he did risk his life. After saving the woman, Skutnick had to be taken to the hospital because he had exposed himself dangerously in the icy water. After a short spell in the hospital tub to regain his normal body temperature, he went home—and this time we got the word right—a hero. Beyond characterizing him correctly, however, we didn't quite know what to do with Lenny Skutnick. Most of us, after all, are too young to have seen a hero before. We could watch his act in all its stunning simplicity played over and over on television. But we wanted more. We wanted context. What was going through his mind when he pulled off his boots and jacket to jump in? And we wanted motives. Why did he do it? Skutnick seemed somewhat puzzled by the questions. He said: She was going under. I was right there watching. She was going to drown if no one moved. I jumped in. Only an age unacquainted with heroism would see non sequiturs in this reply. Some interviewers suggested ellipses where Skutnick put periods. Others tried to get him to fill in the blanks, to speak in modern psychic language of guilt or narcissism or ennui. Skutnick would have none of it. In effect he was saying he did it because she was there. When Sir Edmund Hillary said that to make a deliberate irony, we nodded sagely. When Lenny Skutnick said it to make the point that certain things are self-evident, we shook our heads in disbelief.

NOW THAT WE have the technology, we suffer from the irresistible impulse to process our experiences, whereas before we had no choice but to savor them, to recollect them in tranquillity. The two park rangers who hovered above the wreckage in a helicopter and plucked survivors out of the water were induced on the evening of the crash to reenact for the cameras their initial dash to the helicopter. Here they were, within hours, *acting* the role of heroes. I fear that someone is already working on a script for the "Fourteenth Street Bridge Disaster," and when they ask Lenny Skutnick to play himself, it will be hard for him to say no. Jumping into a freezing river is one thing, but resisting the embrace of the age is another.

C.K.

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